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THE ART
OF WRITING PROSE

THE ART OF WRITING PROSE

REVISED EDITION

BY

ROGER SHERMAN LOOMIS

HELEN R. HULL

MABEL LOUISE ROBINSON

FARRAR & RINEHART, INC.

NEW YORK

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A PREFACE FOR INSTRUCTORS

It is now six years since this book was first issued from the press, and during that time it has enjoyed a considerable measure of favor with teachers and students. But those same years have seen the end of the "noble experiment" of Prohibition and the beginnings of another experiment, the New Deal. Topics that were once timely, references that were once apt, have now become remote or even unintelligible to the rising generations of college freshmen. There was a clear demand for revision.

Revision has given us an opportunity to remedy certain defects in the earlier edition. The chapter on sentences has been recast to conform to the more conventional analysis of unity, coherence, and emphasis; but it has retained at the same time the terminology of physical structure which forces students to realize why certain defects in sentence formation are repellent to the sensitive mind. The chapter on the short story has been largely rewritten. The handbook of grammar, punctuation, and diction has been carefully revised, expanded, and brought into accord with the best modern usage. At the same time it has been necessary to recognize increased laxity in the use of *shall* and *will* and of *due to*. One must face the fact that these tendencies and others like them are not confined to the writing of illiterates. Nevertheless, one need not surrender to them without a struggle.

Teachers have had a great influence upon the language in the past, and where their present influence may count for the continuity of our language and against its too-rapid transformation into a mixture of journalese, slang, underworld cant, and foreign idioms, they should be bold in a good cause. For it is they and the more conservative among authors which prevent Shakespeare and Milton from sharing the fate of Caedmon.

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The earlier edition contained no models of the longer units of composition, such as the research article, informal essay, long argument, character sketch, autobiographic narrative, and short story. We have now remedied this defect by the inclusion of work by Chesterton, Clarence Day, Coffin, Stevenson, Thackeray, Peattie, Tugwell, Milburn, Stark Young, and William Trufant Foster. References are occasionally made to Loomis' *Models for Writing Prose* and Loomis and Clark's *Modern English Readings* (revised edition) for further illustrative readings.

We tender our thanks to those whose criticism and suggestions have been helpful in this revision.

Chapters XI to XIV are the work of Professor Hull and Professor Robinson; most of Chapter VIII, of a writer who prefers to remain anonymous; the rest, as well as the editorial supervision, is the work of Professor Loomis.

R. S. L.

Columbia University

May, 1936

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
A PREFACE FOR INSTRUCTORS	v
I. WRITING: AN ESSENTIAL OF EDUCATION	3
II. SIMPLE EXPLANATIONS	16
A. Choosing a Subject	19
B. Planning the Treatment	20
C. The First Draft	30
D. Revision	30
E. The Final Draft	31
MODEL EXPOSITIONS	
The Willing Game—W. F. Barrett	35
Stopping Strong—Lou Little	36
Intelligent Women and the Farm—Walter B. Pitkin	39
What Is Lime?—Charles Kingsley	41
III. THE NATURE AND THE CHOICE OF WORDS	45
A. The Humanity of Words	46
B. Acquiring a Vocabulary	54
C. The Selection of Words	65
IV. DEFINITIONS	71
A. The Need of Defining	71
B. How Not to Define	73
C. The Essentials of Definition	74
D. Aids to Definition	81
MODEL DEFINITIONS	
The Sentimentalist—Gilbert Keith Chesterton	87
Individualism—Rexford G. Tugwell and Others	88
V. SENTENCES	94
A. The Incomplete Sentence	95
B. Lack of Unity	99
C. Lack of Coherence	102
1. The Loose-Jointed Sentence	102
2. The Dislocated Sentence	109
3. The Lopsided Sentence	115
4. The Broken-Backed Sentence	119
D. Lack of Emphasis	122
1. The Bloated Sentence	122
2. The Limping Sentence	124

CHAPTER	PAGE
E. Sentence Variety	136
F. Effective Sentences	141
1. The Long Periodic Sentence	142
2. The Short, Wiry Sentence	144
3. The Symmetrical Sentence	145
VI. PARAGRAPHS	150
A. The Nature of Paragraphs	150
B. Unity	154
C. Coherence	159
1. The Use of Conjunctive Words and Phrases	163
2. Placing Words of Reference and Comparison	165
3. Putting Similar Ideas in Similar Form	166
4. Announcing the Paragraph Plan	168
D. Emphasis	173
1. Emphatic Expression	174
2. Emphatic Repetition	176
3. Emphatic Position	178
E. The Development of the Paragraph	185
VII. BUILDING THE RESEARCH ARTICLE	189
A. Choosing the Subject	191
B. Making a Tentative Bibliography	194
C. Fixing the Controlling Purpose	202
D. Taking Notes	205
E. Outlining	210
F. The Introduction	216
G. Literary Manners	220
H. Coherence	221
I. Emphasis	223
J. The Final Draft and the Footnotes	224
MODEL RESEARCH ARTICLE	
The Foreign Agitator, An old American Institution— Sylvia Kopald Selekmán	227
VIII. THE INFORMAL ESSAY	238
A. Qualities	238
1. Gusto	238
2. Originality	239
3. Informality	241
4. Incompleteness	242
5. Free Structure	243
6. Genial Egotism	244
7. Humor	245
B. Style	245
C. Kinds of Essay and Their Development	252
1. The Reminiscent Essay	252
2. Hobbies and Hatreds	255
3. The Nature Essay	257
4. The Essay of Ideas	260

CONTENTS

ix

CHAPTER

PAGE

MODEL ESSAYS

Tunbridge Toys—William Makepeace Thackeray	262
Mad Money—Stark Young	269
Pages from an Almanac—Donald Culross Peattie	274
An Apology for Idlers—Robert Louis Stevenson	276

IX. DESTRUCTIVE ARGUMENT 287

A. Profitable Argument	287
B. The Refutation of Fallacies	290
1. Loose Terms	292
2. General Assumption	300
3. Dodging the Issue	308
4. Ignoring Alternatives	312
5. False Analogy	315
6. Hasty Generalization	318
7. Mistaken or Confused Cause	323
8. Statistical Fallacies	330
C. Questionable Statements of Fact	332
1. Vague and Improbable Statements	333
2. Unreliable Witnesses	335
D. Refutation of Long Arguments	342

X. CONSTRUCTIVE ARGUMENT 344

A. Formulating the Proposition	345
B. Investigation	346
C. Deciding the Issues	350
D. Working Out a Brief	355
E. Writing the Introduction	366
F. Adapting the Brief	368
G. Composing the Argument Proper	370
H. The Conclusion	372

MODEL ARGUMENT

Should Students Study?—William Trufant Foster	377
---	-----

XI. DESCRIPTION 389

A. Imaginative Writing	389
B. Description	391
C. Equipment for Description	393
1. Sight	394
2. Sound	398
3. Smell	401
4. Taste	404
5. Touch	407
6. Combination of Senses	410
D. Selection of Detail	415
E. Arrangement of Material	423
F. Style	427

XII. THE CHARACTER SKETCH 438

A. Relation of the Character Sketch to Description	438
B. The Problem	439

CHAPTER	PAGE
C. Appearance	441
D. Speech	444
E. Gesture	449
F. Mental Analysis	449
G. Action	450
H. The Value of Simplification	454
I. The Effect of Generalities	456
J. The Equipment of the Writer	458
MODEL CHARACTER SKETCHES	
Father Hires a Cook—Clarence Day	462
Father Sews on a Button—Clarence Day	464
The Boy Audubon—Donald Culross Peattie	466
XIII. AUTOBIOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE	469
A. Story-Telling	469
B. Autobiography	473
C. The Popularity of Autobiography	474
D. The Material	477
E. The Selection of Material	479
F. Methods of Writing	483
MODEL AUTOBIOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE	
Lost Paradise—Robert P. Tristram Coffin	487
XIV. THE SHORT STORY	491
A. The Illusion of Reality	491
B. What Is Imagination?	493
C. What Is a Short Story?	496
D. Plot	499
E. Elements of a Story	501
1. The Characters	501
2. Events	508
3. Theme	511
F. What Kind of Situation Makes a Good Story?	512
G. The Angle of Narration	514
1. The Objective Angle	517
2. The Subjective Angle	519
H. Planning the Story in Detail	521
I. The Use of Description	526
J. Dialog	531
K. Writing the Story	535
MODEL STORY	
A Student in Economics—George Milburn	536
HANDBOOK	564
I. Grammar	565
II. Punctuation	592
III. Capitalization	612
IV. Diction and Usage	616
INDEX	643

THE ART
OF WRITING PROSE

CHAPTER I

WRITING: AN ESSENTIAL OF EDUCATION

A FEW years ago there was prominently displayed inside every bus that ran on Fifth Avenue, New York, a placard bearing a few simple words such as: "Your world-wide contact with good bonds"; "For up-to-date facts on good bonds." For the opportunity to present these few words over and over again to the public, the National City Company paid every year \$20,000. Why? Because words rightly chosen move the minds and influence the actions of men. Lincoln jotted down a few words on scraps of paper; he spoke them at Gettysburg; they have been printed thousands of times and scattered to the ends of the earth. They have begotten in the souls of millions a determination that, in spite of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, "government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Yet they were words, mere words.

In infinitely less significant ways it is possible for all of us to accomplish our desires, to project our personalities by means of the written and printed word. To-morrow you may write to your father in an effort to convince him that his disapproval of fraternities is unsound, and that you should be allowed to join Pi

Sigma Omicron. Next week you may be called on to prepare a report on biology or economics. Next spring you may feel a powerful urge to point out how little the editor of the *College News* knows about the soul of a freshman. Will it make no difference in all these contingencies what words you use, and how you put them together?

After graduation you may be called on to present a lengthy report on a sales campaign for an automobile accessory. A club may call on you to present a paper on your experiences as a social worker or on your transpacific flight. Will you find it an agony and give it up in despair, or will the principles of clear exposition and interesting narration that you learned in college and that have become through practice a part of your mental machinery, enable you to meet the situation and to establish your place in your organization or in the intellectual life of your community? The fact is, as members of society we cannot avoid the use of words. Evidently, words are as inevitable in human society as they are powerful.

Now it is the business of a college to see that what one has to use in the large affairs of life he uses correctly and skillfully. That is why the young man bent on making himself an efficient mining engineer or farmer has to study rhetoric, and the girl who wants to steep herself in poetry may be called on to write on the making of fudge or the meaning of bolshevism. High school is supposed to teach—but usually does not—that degree of correctness in writing which places one in a literate social class. One learns to spell for the simple reason that educated people are expected to

spell, just as they wear clean linen and eat peas with a fork. A man may say, "My car don't run good," and become a bank president, but the odds are against him. A woman may say, "Between you and I, they looked like they was considerable aggravated," and become the bank president's private secretary. But she will lose her job when her employer finds her out. No college can afford to send out students whose speech and writing are slovenly, without trying to teach them what contributes surely to their material advantage and social grace.

But the college tries to do more than teach good form in words. It tries to teach how to use words with clarity and power. That is a far more difficult task, and involves much more than can ever be learned from grammars, rhetorics, and dictionaries alone. To write well taps all one's resources and all sides of one's life. Nothing reveals more surely than a student's themes how well rounded is his mind and his personality. And it is well for him to realize from the first that success in composition involves not merely two hours' preparation per assignment: it involves most of his waking hours. "A large order!" you say. But language is an expression of life; and no one can become a fully developed writer who has not read, and lived, and learned from others, and sorted his knowledge, and thought about it, and given us the results of it all frankly and faithfully. A good all-round writer is not half a man; he is about a dozen average men rolled into one.

To put it more specifically: if you would write well, read much and wisely; live intensely; ask questions often but discreetly; classify and analyze; reason

logically; be honest. Let us go over these essentials of good composition one by one.

1. Reading

To write without having first read is like playing football without ever watching a game, or manufacturing a new motor car without first studying the other makes already on the market. There are many other reasons for reading; but it should be self-evident that a man who wants to write well must learn his craft from other writers. He should read, read, read. All the time he is absorbing unconsciously the art of writing—and if he reads wisely, he takes in a great deal besides. “A good book,” said Milton in an immortal sentence, “is the life blood of a master spirit, treasured up to a life beyond life.” And when we read such a book, we share in that life.

But you ask, “When can I read? I have no time.” The answer is, “Find time.” Few students are so busy with studies and valuable college activities that they cannot find time to read; and as for the valueless activities, the sooner they are discarded, the better. Many students systematically “kill time” several hours a day. Perhaps if you will count up the hours you have spent in the course of a week which have left you no richer in friendships, in knowledge, in health and strength, in the cultivation of your best powers, you may realize that you have plenty of time at your disposal, plenty of time when you might be reading Huxley, Beerbohm, Beebe, or Edna Millay.

Find time. There is the dreary wait for the dentist

or the barber or the professor who is late to his appointment. How much pleasanter if you have brought with you a copy of *Harper's* or a volume of Dickens.

Find time. Turn to the sporting page first if you like, but unless you intend to be a professional trainer or betting man, why study the page with such exhaustive attention when there are other pages that deserve the interest of a well-rounded college student? Business, politics, industry, art, literature, international relations, religion, fill the bulk of any respectable paper. A little resolution and a little foresight will make it possible for most students to find an hour or two a day for reading beyond what is required for their courses. And without good reading there is no good writing.

2. *Intense Living*

That does not mean living a cinema scenario of crude excitement—speed, cocktails, police courts, jazz. It does not mean existing only in those seconds when Fleetfoot circles the end for a seventy-yard run, or Bing raps out a “homer.” To feel the thrill of such moments is natural and easy; but is that a powerful radio set which responds only to the nearest jazz orchestra, or is it a feeble one? To live intensely in the comparative humdrum of meals, lectures, talks, street-car rides, concerts, college meetings, and chapel exercises demands a much higher vitality.

As you walk across the campus in the fall, are you in a comatose state, or do you respond to the gorgeous effects of copper, crimson, and gold of the autumn foliage—effects which European visitors tell us are

among the wonders of the world? As you sit in the classroom are you awake to the comedies—and tragedies—that are being enacted there? The bluffer and his little game, the impatient know-it-all, the homesick student staring out of the window—all play their parts in the drama. Few students realize how much they can add to the interest of the classroom by their own responsiveness. Few inexperienced teachers can lift the dead weight of a lethargic class, but a little intelligent coöperation from the students can make the hour profitable and entertaining.

To live intensely, then, is to live as if at a play, quick to catch the beauty of the setting, the meaning of the dialog, the nuances of character, the strange mingling of humor and tragedy that makes up life. But it is better than any play, for you too can play a part. If the plot does not go to your liking, you can throw a monkey wrench into the machinations of the villain, expose the fraud, encourage the timid, make truth and justice prevail. Without intensity of observation and feeling, writing must always remain a matter of desiccated, bloodless abstractions.

3. Intellectual Curiosity

There are few professions or positions that do not offer more to the well-informed than to the ill-informed person. And in writing there are few shortcomings that betray themselves more quickly than lack of information. "The defendant had nothing to say, and he said it," might be the verdict on many sermons,

political speeches, and themes. Intellectual curiosity will save you from such a comment.

Curiosity can be satisfied, of course, from books, magazines, and newspapers, but there is as much if not more to be learned from people directly. Gene Tunney may be distinguished as former heavyweight champion of the world, but he is also distinguished as a good listener. He came from a tough district in New York and fought in the marine corps in France—circumstances hardly likely to turn out a well-informed man of the world. But he took every chance that came his way to listen to men with wider range and wider knowledge. "When subjects were discussed of which he knew nothing, he gained whatever information he could on the spot, and then made it a point to look up the opinions of authorities. The result is that to-day he is far better informed on technical subjects of general interest than most well-educated men of more mature age, and, when pressed, can give a complete, informative exposition."

And one can do more than listen. An intelligent, discreet questioner can learn from the traveler, the lawyer, the policeman, the cook, the janitor, all manner of interesting things. An advertising woman may reveal some secrets of popular psychology. A farmer may tell why he believes in coöperation, and his wife may explain why she believes it should begin at home. A few weeks ago, the papers recorded that a burglar, in the midst of collecting the cash and jewelry, paused to satisfy his victim's curiosity regarding burglar psychology. Facts, vital, significant, are bottled up in

every head. Draw them out, and you will never be at a loss for a theme subject.

4. Classification and Analysis

Outside of fiction and poetry, writing is largely concerned with imparting facts and ideas, and is therefore akin to science, which is concerned with discovering them. Science from the beginning has found indispensable two fundamental processes: classification and analysis. Both are methods of division, but classification divides many phenomena into classes, whereas analysis divides a single phenomenon into its component parts. Scientific progress depends on the application of these processes. Trees, bacilli, stars, customers, until these things are classified, where are the sciences of dendrology, pathology, astronomy, and salesmanship? Or how can one explain these sciences in writing without classification? So also if one is writing about college students, one must classify. For what is true of one group is utterly untrue of another, and to discuss college students in general without classification would result in a series of broad statements followed by exceptions, reservations, recantations, and partial denials. The reader would be fortunate if he got a single distinct idea from all the crisscrossing information. To write on the "College Student of To-day" without classifying is very much like writing on "The American Rock of To-day," for any general statement about students or rocks is likely to be untrue not only of individuals but also of whole classes. In order to get near the truth and avoid confusion, one must classify.

One must classify in order to write accurately about the modern novel, about ciphers, about the attitude of foreigners toward America. In the interests of truth and clarity, develop the habit of classifying.

So, too, one should learn to analyze. How far should we have progressed in chemistry if we had not learned how to break up substances into their elements? What should we think of a banker who had not worked out the essential elements of a good investment? The analysis of ideas and words must precede their accurate use. It is impossible to write intelligently about patriotism until one has realized what a grotesque blend it is of noblest self-sacrifice and devotion to the proper liberties and rights of one's own people with crass complacency and brutal exultation in destroying other human beings by gas in the lungs, a bayonet in the bowels, or a shell that scatters their fragments for a hundred yards. In the interests of clarity and truth one must analyze.

5. Straight Thinking

For the same reason, learn to think straight. While on the plane of mechanical achievement and physical comfort and convenience—at least, for the moneyed classes—our civilization advances with incredible speed, on the plane of social, political, and religious thought, the great masses of our people move slowly, and are as likely to move sideways or backward as forward. Intellectually our society hardly rivals that of the Greeks, and artistically it is far behind them. Trained, disciplined, logical minds are a crying need of our nation.

Slipshod, happy-go-lucky thinking betrays itself at once in writing. A mind that goes chasing after every red herring drawn across the path, that jumps to broad conclusions from a very meager take-off, that argues in a circle, that snatches at every statement that pleases its prejudices, may be a lively, agile mind, but it evokes neither respect nor assent. Learning to follow a thought steadily through, to keep your reader with you, and bring him to your conclusions, is not a process learned overnight. It is the result of long and resolute self-training. To-day is not too soon to begin watching your mind at work, and forcing it to work more accurately. The result will inevitably appear in your writing; it, also, will begin to possess clarity, strength, and structure.

6. *Honesty*

The student who makes any measurable effort to follow the previous counsels will scarcely be other than honest. Reading, living, asking questions, he will not be at a loss for something to say. Reading, sorting his material, and thinking rigorously, he will not be at a loss for an effective way of saying it. It is the empty and untrained brain that is tempted to deliberate dishonesty. All the more reason for following the counsels already given.

But even the honest student is sometimes unaware of just what literary honesty means. In other courses than English he may have received credit for merely transcribing sentences and paragraphs from books. In other words, the requirement has been simply to copy or to condense; there was no question of originality

of expression. These are not the standards of originality in composition courses or in the world at large, where the name of Ralph Hempstead or Ethel Schwartz attached to a composition is accepted as an assurance that the expression is entirely original with Ralph Hempstead or Ethel Schwartz. The literary world applies the ugly name of plagiarist to one who writes under his own name a composition in which sentences or even individual expressions have been borrowed without acknowledgment. Nowhere should a higher standard of honor be observed than in composition courses, which exist primarily to train and test a student's powers of original expression.

When the student is working from books or notes, as he will probably be asked to do, he should exercise particular care. He is likely to follow the line of least resistance and to copy off the sentences which say what he wants to say; he may fail through carelessness to enclose them in quotation marks or to make any acknowledgment as to his source. By this failure, however, he puts himself in an embarrassing position; his work will be indistinguishable from that of the deliberate cheat. The kleptomaniac, who steals without knowing what he is doing, is likely to have as unpleasant a time as a sneak thief. In order to avoid false suspicions, every student should rigidly adhere, in this course and in all published writing, to the following rules:

- a. Never write with the book or periodical from which you may be obtaining material open before you, except when you wish to quote.

b. Quote whenever you wish to gain the advantage which the special authority or the inimitable style of another author confers. Then always use quotation marks, and usually mention the author's name. This rule is relaxed for all easily recognized extracts from Shakespear and the Bible, for the best-known passages of other authors, and for common or proverbial expressions.

c. When taking notes, distinguish carefully between passages merely summarized and those copied word for word. The former may be used freely, but the latter, of course, must be recognized as direct quotations and enclosed in quotation marks.

One may see from all this that writing is not a simple matter of avoiding flagrant rhetorical crimes or of taking the contents of the dictionary and arranging them on the page in pompous or sentimental patterns. The ink that flows from your pen taps all your senses, including your good sense and your sense of humor. The words you spread on the page reveal inexorably how full and rich is the life you are leading. They show how much or how little you read, how keenly you observe, how vividly you respond, how much you pick up from people, how orderly and neat your mind is, how surely it works, and finally how genuine you are in self-expression. Samuel Butler remarks: "A great portrait is always more a portrait of the painter than of the painted." A three-page theme often reveals far more of the writer than of the subject. Try in all your writing not to reveal yourself as better than you are, but to reveal the best that is in

you. Cultivate that best. This chapter is written for no other purpose than to show you why you should learn to write, and how, by living with all your finest powers and faculties, you may write well. You will then not only satisfy the requirements of this course and other courses; you will also satisfy yourself that when later in life you come to present your thoughts or experiences on paper, you will be understood and enjoyed.

EXERCISE

1. Write a frank analysis of yourself, based on the first five qualities mentioned in the first chapter. It will do you no harm to confess your weaknesses; on the contrary, the more acutely you realize them, and the more clearly your instructor understands your difficulties, the more chance there is of your overcoming them. Be frank. Be systematic.
2. Write a detailed and definite account of what you personally can do from day to day to apply the first five principles enumerated in the chapter. Unless the theme is specific, it is worthless.

CHAPTER II

SIMPLE EXPLANATIONS

ONE of the commonest and most practical forms of writing is what the rhetorician calls exposition and the layman calls explaining. Your mother asks you to explain what an "orientation course" means; the history instructor asks you in a quiz to explain the essentials of the feudal system; you explain, without being asked, how the trick play worked by which the varsity won last Saturday. Maturer years will not exempt you from the necessity of exposition, written or oral, for almost every profession employs it. The yegg explains to his accomplices how to blow the safe. The prosecuting attorney explains the evidence which fastens the guilt on the yegg. The judge explains to the jury the point of law involved. The salesman explains to his Honor the fine points of a new car. The salesman's wife explains to the cook how to make the chestnut stuffing for the goose. The cook explains to the priest why she does not send Mike to the parochial school. The priest explains to his congregation the nature of God, man, and the universe. Teachers, demonstrators, coaches, lecturers, writers of informative articles make their living by explaining. Foggy exposition means wasted time and energy, whereas brilliant exposition means efficiency and often

fame. Good ideas, in order to become effective, must be "put across," and exposition is the art of "putting them across."

First, let us be clear how exposition differs from two other familiar forms of writing—argument and description. Explaining means making a person understand anything, from the solar system to an electron, or from the way the League of Nations works to the way in which potato salad may be made tempting. It differs from description in that it aims primarily to make the intellect understand, whereas description aims to make the imagination realize shape, color, light, sound, odor, taste, and movement. The dictionary defines "autumn" as "the season between summer and winter, from late August to November." That enables us to understand the word, to place it, to use it intelligently. Keats describes autumn thus:

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core.

These lines enable us to see in the mind's eye and to feel in the imagination the sensations of autumn. The definition explains, the poem describes.

It is easy to confuse explaining with arguing. When you give your reasons why a college education is worth the expense and time, are you explaining or arguing? The test is simple. Are you assuming incredulity or doubt in your reader's mind? Then you are arguing.

If you merely assume curiosity in your reader, a desire to get your opinion for whatever it may be worth, then you are explaining. But as soon as you take the attitude that your opinion is challenged and must be defended, then you pass over into argument, and your writing must be judged by far severer standards. Therefore, in all the work assigned in exposition, be careful to explain merely; do not argue. If you deal with the fraternity system, do not defend or attack it; explain it. If your subject is the advantages of joining a fraternity, point them out as if your reader had asked for information and were ready to take your word in the matter. Do not undertake the far more laborious task of supporting your statements by unimpeachable witnesses, statistics, and all the necessary precautions of cogent argument. The way of explanation is comparatively easy. If you tell the truth as you see it, avoid absurdity and inconsistency, and make your meaning clear, you have accomplished all that simple explanation demands.

Nevertheless, as we have seen, to make your meaning clear is no light task. Forethought, planning, constant consideration of your audience, revision are as necessary in explaining Hamlet's tragedy as in dramatizing it. Even though the dramatist's imaginative and emotional power may be a thousand times greater than that of the dramatist's interpreter, yet both men equally fail unless they concentrate keen intelligence on the problem. The average freshman vastly underestimates the degree of strategy required in a first-rate exposition of so simple a matter as basketball or loading hay; some thousands of themes that have passed

under my eye witness the fact. Even if the assignment seems easy, even if the following instructions seem obvious or superfluous, the student will do well to follow them painstakingly and see if the result does not justify the trouble. For almost all readers show an amazing ability to misunderstand what seems plain as sunshine to the writer, especially when they are not familiar with the subject.

CHOOSING A SUBJECT

If the student is called on to write an exposition between 300 and 500 words in length, his first problem is to choose an appropriate subject. It must be adapted to treatment within those limits. Do not select "My Reasons for Coming to College" if the only reason is that Dad sent you. A little domestic drama or a 3,000 word argument might be written on the situation, but not a 300 word exposition. On the other hand, do not choose subjects which cannot be handled adequately in the space allotted. Try to squeeze a tarpon into a goldfish bowl, or a calf into a rabbit hutch, but do not cram a dissertation on the manufacture of Fords or the changing position of the negro into 500 words. The result is a certain failure. Avoid this danger by selecting only a small division of a big subject or a small and simple subject.

A second consideration in choosing a topic is your own familiarity with it. It is better to write from first-hand knowledge on "How I Earned My Keep and Three Hundred Dollars Last Summer" than from

vaguely remembered, bookish impressions on the growth of tenant farming.

A third consideration is the intelligibility and interest of the subject for your readers. If your theme is to be read in class, your classmates are your audience, and you should find a topic suited to them. If they are all students of engineering or household science, a somewhat technical subject is available, for they are capable of understanding it. But it is an impossible task to explain an advanced chemical experiment to a class which has had no training in the subject. It is not enough that they should comprehend; they should not be put to sleep. If the subject fascinates you, you will probably be able to communicate some of its spell to others. But even a passion for making oatmeal or playing croquet will hardly make these pastimes enthralling to young persons of to-day. Some elements of novelty, some general interest should lurk in the topic, or you had better discard it. If baffled, turn to page 32 for suggestions.

When you have hit upon a subject that is not too big, that you understand, that your audience is capable of understanding and enjoying, you are now ready to consider how you can make them understand it clearly.

PLANNING THE TREATMENT

The planning of a short exposition should not be a long or formidable process, for all that is necessary is a sheet of scratch paper, a pen or pencil, and at most ten minutes.

The first step is to decide on the length and content

of the introduction. Many students seem to think that the introduction to a 300 word theme should be as long as the introduction to a magazine article, and before they know it, they have used up half their space. Others dispense with an introduction altogether. The length of an introduction may easily be determined by asking yourself the question: "Do I need every available word for the explanation itself?" If that is so, the introduction should not consist of more than one or two sentences at most. If, however, space is not so precious, you may expand the introduction to fill a quarter of the composition. That is, if you have something to say. Padding is bad enough anywhere, but in the introduction it is fatal. It plainly warns the reader: "Prepare to be bored."

What should an introduction do? Obviously, it must lead the reader up to the subject. It may do this abruptly or gradually, but this it must do. By the time the reader has finished the introduction, he should know what road he is to follow. Here is a direct statement of the subject in the opening sentence:

A very large amount of nonsense is written on the subject of violet rays, and some good purpose may be served by trying to summarize what is known at the moment of writing, even though it may be out of date when this paper is read.

Sometimes the subject itself requires preliminary definition or elucidation. For example, if one were going to explain how to play "hurley," one would naturally have to inform his readers that hurley is a game, something like hockey, played in Ireland; and he might add

that though the game is probably twelve centuries old at least, "hurling matches" are a popular Irish sport still. Another situation where preliminary explanations are necessary before the subject proper is introduced, is handled in the following:

With the advent of power developments, their hydro-electric dams extending hundreds of feet into the air from the surface of the river waters, the way to the salmon spawning beds seemed to be completely blocked. If the salmon could not get up the rivers to spawn, where would the next year's pack come from? The problem not only involved the salmon industry with its investments of millions, but affected an important food supply. Since it seemed more than merely an engineering problem, the engineers and ichthyologists put their heads together and evolved a system of elevating fish to practically any height desired. Previous experiments showed that salmon would not of their own accord climb "ladders" over fifty feet high. Therefore, the system now used on the Baker River, in Washington, lifts thousands of fish annually over the 250-foot dam, with a loss of only 5 per cent.*

Moreover, if the development of the topic is likely to prove hard to follow, let your reader know not only your destination but also the stages in the journey. If you are to explain a process, announce the steps in the introduction, before discussing each one separately. Or if you wish to mark off sharply certain divisions of the topic in order that the reader may grasp them better, announce those divisions.

The "crawl" is a method of swimming which is far faster than the other methods, and should be learned by everyone

* From the *Scientific American*.

who enjoys water sports. To acquire the art calls for patience and practice, even for those who are already accustomed to the water. One learns first the leg motion, then the arm motion, then breathing, and finally the combination of all three. Let me explain each of these steps in turn.

The more unfamiliar the topic is to the reader, the more complicated its treatment, the more should the writer avail himself of every aid to clarity.

If you now find that you still have space left in your introduction after the requirements of clarity are satisfied, then you may well ask whether you had not best begin by engaging the reader's interest or rousing his curiosity. Is there in your topic anything likely to amuse, startle, or in any other way affect your reader? If so, and if you have room for it, place this information at the beginning. Is it a new shampoo process? Then let us know who has used it, and with what results. Is it a dairy appliance? Then let us know if it has been recently introduced in the college farm, or if it is likely to cut down the danger of infection from milk. Point out such matters of interest at the beginning. The bait should be on the point of the hook, not halfway up the line. Here are two examples:

It is a well-known fact that the leather of bindings that are much handled lasts very much better than that on books which remain untouched on the shelves. There is little doubt that the reason for this is that the slight amount of grease the leather receives from the hands nourishes it and keeps it flexible. It would add immensely to the life of old leather bindings if librarians would have them treated, say once a year, with some preservative. The consequent expense would be saved many times over by the reduction of the cost of

rebinding. I have found that a solution of paraffin wax in castor oil answers well. It is cheap and very simple to prepare.*

For the past few weeks the word "rediscount" has occupied an extremely important place in the news. It has been almost impossible to pick up a newspaper without seeing this word a number of times, all the way from the columns devoted to business and finance, through the editorial pages, to the front page itself. Most business men doubtless are familiar with its meaning, its connection with the Federal Reserve banks, and its relation both to securities and commodities. In the belief, however, that many of those interested in this department are not familiar with it, we shall try to explain it briefly and as simply as possible.†

In planning your introduction, then, ask yourself:

1. What precisely is my topic? Does it need to be more than named in order that my reader may know what I am talking about?
2. Is my topic so unfamiliar or intricate that I need to announce my plan of treatment beforehand?
3. Do I have space to engage my reader's interest, and if so, how shall I do it?

Jot down the answers to these questions, and you will know what should go into your introduction.

EXERCISES

1. Note the introductions to the model expositions at the end of this chapter. How have their authors answered the questions raised above?
2. Select a topic for a brief exposition, and write out the answers to the questions above.

* From D. Cockerell, *Bookbinding*. D. Appleton & Company, N. Y.

† From the *Outlook*.

The body of an exposition may follow so many different plans that it is impossible to give more than the most general specifications here. Nevertheless, these are important.

First, find out the essential divisions of your subject, or if there are none, but simply a number of optional points, decide which of those you can best develop in the space allotted. To explain satisfactorily a trick play in football would certainly require explanation of the following points: the preliminary position of the players, the movements of the ball, the parts played by the several essential players. Omission of any one of these matters is fatal, and they should all be jotted down as essential points to be discussed. But there are also optional points to be taken up, such as the effectiveness of the play under particular circumstances or against certain kinds of teams, and the consequences of failure. Often you will need your entire space for the essential points only: in that case you need only be sure to include them all. If there is space for optional points, jot down as many as you can well handle. It is of the utmost importance that the points you are to make should stand out sharply in your own mind, for if they are rather blurry to you, your reader will see nothing but a formless, incoherent muddle. Here is an opportunity to exercise those powers of analysis and classification mentioned in the previous chapter as essential to the good writer.

Examples of analytical jottings follow:

Topic: Advantages which a knowledge of Latin literature confers on a student of English. *Heads:* In-

sight into meaning and connotation of English words. Firmer syntax. Familiarity with classical themes and allusions.

Topic: The manufacture of rayon. *Heads:* Raw materials. Methods of dissolving them. Spraying the solution. Washing. Spinning. Drying. Comparison of rayon with silk. Immense production.

Topic: How to watch tennis. *Heads:* Mistakes of the average "fan." Reasons why spectacular shots are not necessarily good tennis. Shots that show real strategy.

Second, see that the headings do not overlap or repeat unnecessarily. For instance, it would be a blunder, if you were explaining the uses of a dictionary, to set down "Teaches meanings of words" and "Makes vocabulary accurate" as two separate points. Such overlapping and repetition are the result of careless thought, feeble analysis. A business executive who set two people to carry out the same job, or the scientist who absent-mindedly put the same ingredient into his compound twice over, or the statistician who unwittingly duplicated the same factor in his calculations, is obviously committing an elementary and serious error. But he produces no more confusion than the writer whose headings overlap.

What, for instance, is the inevitable effect of the following analysis of Charm: Table charm. Conversational charm. Physical charm. Charm in dress. Everyday charm. Social charm? Or of this analysis of Pitching Hay: Preparations. What to wear. What not to do.

What to do. "Cocking up." Pitching. Avoid green hay. Mistakes of a greenhorn?

Third, number the points in the best order. Often that order is manifest and inevitable. Practically every recipe or chemical experiment follows the plan: apparatus, materials, steps in chronological sequence. Often the arrangement is determined by the fact that certain matters need to be made plain before others can be understood. Often, however, there is no inherent reason why one item should take precedence over another. In such cases it is usual to place the most important last, so that the reader does not have a sinking feeling as the theme proceeds, but rather realizes that a good biblical precedent has been followed and that the good wine has been kept till the last.

Can you suggest any improvements in the order of these headings? *Topic*: The Future of Radio. *Heads*: Cultural defects of radio programs. Mechanical defects of receivers. Possible remedies. The invention of the radio. *Topic*: The Ideal Manager of a Team. *Heads*: Honesty essential. Duties of a manager. Business experience desirable. Affability. Accurate methods of accounting. Firmness.

Fourth—and this is most important—estimate roughly what proportion of your remaining word-allowance should be assigned to each of the divisions. It is an improvident boy who at Thanksgiving stuffs himself so full of soup, crackers, celery, and olives that when the turkey and mince pie come round, the packing space is exhausted. Apportion to each point an approximate number of words. If, as is quite possible, you discover now that one point alone really requires 300 or

400 words to make clear, do not head straight for disaster by trying to condense your materials, but change at once. If one point, taken by itself, will make a suitable subject, adopt it. But if not, choose a fresh topic before it is too late.

In planning the body of a short exposition, then, the student should ask himself the following questions:

1. Into what parts should I divide my subject in order to make it most clear?

2. Do these parts overlap or duplicate each other unnecessarily?

3. What is the best sequence to follow in order to secure clarity and a heightened interest?

4. What proportion of space had I better assign to each of these parts?

When you have answered these questions, and taken appropriate action, you should have a good working plan for the body of your exposition.

EXERCISES

1. Jot down the headings covered in the model expositions at the end of this chapter.

2. Continuing with the topic selected for purposes of introduction, write down the answers to the questions above.

There remains the question of a conclusion. If a conclusion cannot justify its existence, it should be suppressed. What falls flatter than such sentences as these: "I have tried to explain to you how I make sweet pickles, and I hope you will try the recipe some day. I am sure you will be satisfied with the result." Or these:

"College spirit means loyalty to the athletic teams, loyalty to the scholastic aims, loyalty to the higher things of life. We should all try to cultivate college spirit in these three ways." Such banalities make a rhetoric instructor groan, and curse his fate, and long for the day when promotion or death will relieve him from the necessity of reading another such theme.

What is wrong? The conclusion is futile because it repeats what is already too obvious. Better none at all. To recapitulate is sound strategy when the subject is unfamiliar or complicated, or when a special effort is needed to stamp the main points in the reader's memory. But generally, in short expositions, recapitulation is unnecessary.

Many themes need no separate conclusion. The explanation of an experiment may well end with its completion. But when something is necessary to round off the theme, there are various effective devices. One may conclude the exposition of a woman's character with a brief picture of her in habitual attitude and surroundings, or with a concise statement of the results of her activity, or with some pithy quotation about her, or with a characteristic remark of her own. An exposition of the methods of detecting forgery might end with an account of a particularly clever piece of detective work, or with some figures on bank losses through forgery. See that your conclusion does not require too much space, and if necessary, sacrifice something from your introduction. Next to the clarity of the exposition itself, there is nothing more important than the vigor of the closing sentences. In other words, do not end your trip on a flat tire.

THE FIRST DRAFT

The planning of a short exposition requires concentrated thought, sometimes acute thought, but it should not take long, not half so long as reading about it. Nor, when once the plan is sketched out, should the first writing be a laborious task. Take a few sheets of scratch paper, write down your title, and begin. Follow the lines you have laid down for yourself. Begin new paragraphs at important changes of thought. See that the main points stand out, are not lost in the details. Write as clearly as you can: remember that your object is to make your reader understand every matter as clearly as you do yourself.

REVISION

Every first draft has imperfections of more than one sort. Some you will recognize yourself; others may have to be called to your notice by a friendly instructor. It is not our business now to go into the hundred and one possible mistakes. But since the *raison d'être* of exposition is clarity, it is wise for the writer to go over his first draft, looking for every obscurity and correcting it.

1. Ask concerning every unusual or technical word: "Will my classmates understand it?" If not, define it or choose one more familiar.

2. Ask concerning every sentence: "Can I bring out the meaning more clearly in any other way?" If so, revise it.

3. Ask again concerning every sentence: "Does it fit naturally on to what has preceded? Can my reader follow the train of thought? Or is there a gap, a break in the connection?" It is just as important that sentences should hang together as that the couplings in a train should hold. Make sure that your reader can follow you and will follow you, without forcing him constantly to guess what you meant to say, but left unsaid.

4. Ask concerning every paragraph: "Is there here one main point or purpose? Is it clear to any sensible reader?" If not, see that you make the dominating point of the paragraph stand out.

THE FINAL DRAFT

When the first draft has been made as lucid as you can make it, when you feel sure that the reader will be impressed by the system, the neatness, the sureness of your presentation, then you are ready to make your final draft. Surely no graduate of high school or preparatory school needs to be told that a legible page makes a favorable impression from the start, whereas a hurried scrawl, smudged and scratched, prepares the reader for the worst. When the copy has been made, scrutinize it to avoid misspellings, omissions, and errors in punctuation. An airplane with the most powerful motor, a magnificent wing-spread, and perfect controls may crash for lack of attention to a few screws. So a theme perfect in content and expression often fails for lack of five minutes' attention to the mere mechanics of correct English. Such alterations as you need to make at this stage may generally be

carried out with the aid of an ink eraser, or may be written neatly in between the lines.

By this time you are doubtless tired of the word clarity, and perhaps would like to hear something of other literary qualities, such as charm and force. But it is just as well to concentrate attention at first on the prime requisite of good exposition. An exposition may lack charm and force, and yet serve its purpose, but if it is not clear, it has no reason for existence. Charm, force, and clarity are the virtues of exposition, but the greatest of these is clarity. Without it charm is a tinkling cymbal, and force sounding brass.

List of Subjects

Taking Color Photographs. How to Pack Grapefruit. How Imitation Silk (Imitation Leather, Celluloid, etc.) Is Made. Hunting Quail. What Becomes of a City's Sewage. How an Electric Refrigerator Works. A Perfect "Spread." A Card Trick. How Not to Ski. Breeding Dogs. A Book Agent's Trick. How to Choose Good Meat. Fumigating a Room. Beating a Forest Fire. Developing a Pitcher. Making Up a School Paper. The Advantages of a Particular Type of Automobile. Training for the Pole Vault. How to Catch Skunks. What to Do for Snake Bite. How Photographs Can Be Made to Lie. How to Keep Free of Colds. How a Broken Bone Is Cured. Developing a Vocabulary. How I Improved My Memory. Defects in My High School Training. The Ideal Kitchen Arrangement. Making Flapjacks. "Busting" a Bronco. How I Worked My Way to Europe. Indian Pottery Making. The Mediterranean Fly. What Makes a Tornado. The Duties of an Athletic Manager. The Unexpected in College Life. Curious Superstitions I Have Encountered. What the Sensible Man Should Wear in Summer. The Fine Points of a Violin. What Is a Share-Cropper? Fighting Grasshoppers.

EXERCISES

1. Point out defects in the following expositions:

a. The engine room of a ship has always been very interesting to me, and of no less interest has been the stoker. This man, who is the main person in every ship, since no ship can run without fuel, seems to possess superhuman endurance. One day, when I was down in the engine room, talking with a stoker, he explained to me the system of his occupation, for indeed it has a system.

The heat was almost overpowering. At regular intervals the massive iron doors of the furnace were opened, and great tongues of fire leaped forth as if to draw one into the seething blaze within. The sinewy bodies and the steely muscles of the men were called into action. The old game of teeter-totter flashed through my mind, as first one man would bend over for a shovel of coal, while another would swing up with a shovel and throw the coals into the flame. Up and down the stokers would go, every fibre taut, sweat glistening on their foreheads, coal-dust smeared over them from top to toe. Lowly though their occupation may be, it is an honorable one.

b. The crawl stroke is faster than the other two internationally recognized strokes. Because of its speed and simplicity it is the most popular of the three. It must be learned, however, by stages, and as a first lesson let us study the kick.

You must first lie flat on the water with your legs extended and toes pointed. Your hands should rest on a log of wood in front of you, for you will not need your arms for a while. Supporting yourself on the log, breathe evenly and easily. Then holding your knees quite stiff, start to kick each leg alternately from your hips only. A good crawler has good legs. Your kick should be regular, timed to a cadence. The toes should travel but six inches; that is, you press one leg down from the hip so that your toes traverse but six inches; then you let that leg rise six inches while you simultaneously press down on the opposite leg. Keep these motions

up for five minutes. Practice makes perfect, and the crawl kick is no exception to the rule.

c. A freshman came to me to ask advice about his poor memory. He said he could not learn his lessons, no matter how much he worked over them. I asked him how he set to work, and found that he had continued his high school habit of simply reading his assignments through in a blind, passive way. A long college lesson in history he would read over as many as four times, yet the next day he had forgotten most of what he had read. He had not analyzed the reading, understood it, or picked out the important points. It was lack of good management rather than of memory. I advised him to read the lesson through once, then to review and analyze it, and finally to consult the book and check up his analysis. This procedure saved him much time, and gave far better results.

Psychologists who have studied the subject of memory announce two very encouraging conclusions. First, nearly every one has more power of memory than he imagines, and second, intensive training produces great improvement. But it should be added that training does not develop the general faculty, but simply increases the ability to do the one particular sort of job that one practices.

The first step in memory training is to decide on exactly the type of memory work you wish to do. If you wish to improve your memory for poetry, you must practise memorizing poetry. If you wish to memorize telephone numbers, you must constantly practise associating names with numbers. If you want to have a fund of good stories to make yourself socially agreeable, keep on the watch for them, and rehearse them in your mind at every opportunity. Proficiency will undoubtedly come in the particular form of memory that you practise, but not in others.

The second step would naturally be to practise the type of memory which you have decided on. But often you will experience an inner resistance. When it comes to the details, you will find yourself indifferent or even unwilling. This

inner resistance will interfere with your success, and the chances are that you will never enter into the game heartily. Overcome this resistance, and it is in your power to improve.*

2. What are the separate points in the following expositions? How are they linked together? What efforts are made to clarify words? What special methods are used to clarify ideas?

MODEL EXPOSITIONS

THE WILLING GAME †

by W. F. Barrett

Some years ago a parlor pastime called the "Willing Game" was a favorite amusement and gave rise to much public discussion. Certain persons were very expert at what appeared to be "thought-reading," a few became professional performers. The public was greatly mystified, some considering it a trick, others believing that the remarkable success attained in private circles proved that trickery was out of the question, and afforded evidence of genuine "thought-transference." The blindfolded performer, whom we may call the percipient, had to do something that had been concealed from him, such as to find a hidden object, pick out a certain person, or write a figure on a blackboard. Some one of the company who knew the secret, and whom we will call the agent, laid his hands lightly on the shoulders or forehead of the percipient, or grasped the hand of the latter and placed it on his forehead, and then thought intently of the thing to be done, but made no conscious effort at guidance. If the percipient were a good subject and allowed his mind to remain passive, he rarely failed to accomplish what was desired; but he could not give the least explanation of how he did it. Both agent and percipient were equally astonished, and it is no wonder that those who took part in the per-

*From the *Scientific Monthly*.

†From W. F. Barrett, *Psychical Research*. Henry Holt and Company.

formance were convinced that some kind of mental wireless telegraphy had occurred independently of the senses.

Here, for example, are some experiments made when I was staying with my friend, the late Mr. Lawson Tait, the famous surgeon, in the Easter of 1877: The percipient, a medical man, having left the room and placed himself beyond eye and ear shot, we agreed that on his return he should move the firescreen and double it back. Recalling the percipient, my host, the surgeon, put his hands around the percipient's waist and silently willed what should be done. After a few moments of indecision, he did exactly what was mentally desired. Among other experiments we willed that the percipient should turn off one out of several lights. This was accurately done; no word was spoken, but the percipient was lightly grasped as before. It is difficult to understand how any muscular impression conveyed at the waist would lead to the raising of the hands and the correct performance of the wish.

STOPPING STRONG *

by Lou Little

In 1928 I was coaching at Georgetown University. The team was one of the lightest with which I have ever worked. It was with the condolences of friends that we left Washington on Friday about mid-season to invade New York for our game with New York University at the Yankee Stadium on the following day.

The N. Y. U. team had established a great record. Ken Strong, who ranks in my mind as perhaps the greatest running back I have ever seen, had been running wild throughout the season behind the magnificent blocking of Ed Hill, a blocking back who was to N. Y. U. what Marty Brill was to Notre Dame teams of about the same period. In game after game Hill had been demonstrating just how important a great blocking tackle can be to a team. On play after play

* From L. Little, *How to Watch Football*, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.

in the earlier tests he had been throwing savage, perfectly timed blocks at the defensive end, pinning him to the line of scrimmage while Strong galloped around the flank, reinforced down-field by running linemen. Ed Hill was that too-rare specimen, the boy who gloried in the assignment of blocking. He did not care who carried the ball so long as he might be given the pleasure of knocking down the chap who got in the ball carrier's way. It is usually necessary to assign two blockers to take care of the end if the job is to be done well. But Ed Hill, who later died a tragic death in an accident before graduation, was no ordinary blocker. He did his job alone, did it well, and thus released an additional lineman for down-field blocking duty.

We had scouted N. Y. U. carefully in earlier games. It was obvious that if this pair of Strong and Hill were to be permitted to function against our light team as the combination had functioned in earlier games, we would be courting gridiron suicide. Unless N. Y. U. could be "outsmarted" by our defense in some way, it looked as if the scoreboard might run out of numbers. Plainly the situation called for some desperate, gambling move. But what was the answer?

Our scouts had come back with word that almost invariably Strong ran to the right and outside when the N. Y. U. formation was unbalanced and strong on that side. Hill's assignment on the play was to nail the defensive left end, pinning him in with a body block. And when Hill pinned them, they usually stayed pinned.

It is an interesting fact in football that the playcalling tendencies of quarterbacks and the running habits of even the greatest backs seldom change in a single week. Scouts and coaches know that in the important situation the player will go back to the play that has gained on previous Saturdays. Obviously Strong liked to run to the right behind the dynamic blocking of Hill. And why not? He had been doing so all season and going for touchdowns. Perhaps he would change this week, but we doubted it. We doubted it to the extent that we had decided deliberately to weaken our de-

fense against the N. Y. U. left side in order to gain abnormal strength against the right.

On the Tuesday afternoon before the game we set up the defense in practice. The first move was to shift the entire defensive line toward the prospective N. Y. U. right side.

"And in addition," I told the slightly amazed left end of Georgetown, "you're going to play wider than usual from your tackle. When Hill comes driving at you, as he surely will, attempting to block you in, your job will be to go across the line of scrimmage, keep your feet and "hand-fight" him, playing him on his outside and paying no attention whatever to the inside. Only keep your feet, play Hill on his outside shoulder, and carry him as wide as possible.

"Then," I explained, "Strong will be forced to run wide to get around you. Our defensive backs will have more time to come up and try to nail him while he's still running laterally, before he 'turns the corner.' Of course, if you can get by Hill and take an occasional shot at Strong, it will be much appreciated. But that will not be your primary job."

The end scratched the back of his neck reflectively for a moment. "But what," he asked, "will happen if Strong cuts inside through the hole I'm leaving between the tackle and me?"

"We'll try not to think of that," I told him. "I hope he doesn't do it and I don't believe he will. But if he runs for touchdowns inside you all day long, that won't be your responsibility—not, at least, until we've tried this out."

Thus we went into the game overshifted, deliberately weakened in one spot, but artificially strengthened in another more vital spot. The sweeping attack of Strong, Hill, and Associates rumbled under way as advertised soon after the game began. I sat on the edge of my coaching bench like a man with an Irish sweepstakes ticket on the Grand National favorite listening to a radio broadcast of the race. I was almost afraid to look.

But I saw, after a few plays, that the plan was working out. Hill, driving blithely out to smack the end as he had

his luckless quarry in earlier games, found that the end, for some unaccountable reason, was not where he was supposed to be. To his surprise, Hill found that the end took longer to reach, was harder to reach, was playing on his outside shoulder, was keeping his feet while "hand-fighting" and was drifting out, thus forcing Hill back.

Strong, at the same time, was discovering that he was running farther with the ball before he could round the end and "turn the corner" up-field. As he was turning that delayed corner, he found two backs waiting for him and ready to "gang" him, though not always with immediate success.

That Strong at any time might cut back through the weak spot we had created between end and tackle was, of course, always possible. But they say that our worst troubles are those that never happen to us, and this one did not happen to Georgetown. The success of the strong side-sweep in earlier games and the dependence on the play had created a situation that impelled N. Y. U. to attack that sector during most of the afternoon. Strong was a superlative back and he gained many yards against us that afternoon. Several times he gained when, in spite of himself, he was forced inside by our secondary defense and involuntarily cut back through the hole we had left open. But he never turned his primary attention to the inside route and he never ran for a touchdown because time after time Georgetown was able to bring up reinforcements on the outside flank, building a barrier across the boulevard over which Strong had rambled to glory on previous Saturdays. This time that lane was, for N. Y. U., the "boulevard of broken dreams."

INTELLIGENT WOMEN AND THE FARM *

by Walter B. Pitkin

There is uniform testimony to the fact that intelligent and sensitive women are leaving the farm. Here are samples :

* From W. B. Pitkin, *The Twilight of the American Mind*. Simon & Schuster, Inc.

"The clever girls and the pretty girls in our country all leave the farm as soon as they can. They will not stand the drudgery of housework on a farm. They see their mothers overworked, getting nowhere except into early graves, and having precious little time for even the simplest of life's enjoyments. Why should a girl stay on the farm anyhow?"

"The young men who stay on the farms and get along well are marrying Scandinavian peasant girls. The better class of American girls won't marry a herd of cattle and five hundred hens and a quarter-section."

"The small farmers around us seem to have married mostly stupid women, dull drudges, who are content to live in the kitchen and cook and scrub all day."

A Pennsylvania school teacher caps the climax: "I have visited most of the farms in the township within range of my school. Fully half of the housewives I have met are distinctly subnormal in their intelligence. Many of them are complete morons, while half a dozen are true feeble-minded types. The shocking thing, though, is that many of these inferior creatures are the wives of the solid, hard-working, and competent small farmers. What will their children be? Just peasants, men with hoes and women with mops!"

My personal impression, gathered from hundreds of farms, is pretty much the same. The focus of agrarian decay, on the human side, is not in the men. It is in the women. And all the current forces of American life are combining to draw, ever faster and faster, the refined, intelligent, fastidious woman from the countryside. Life, even on a good farm, bears heavily on the woman. Look on the picture of the drudgery.

The Department of Agriculture, a few years ago, surveyed 10,015 farm houses in 33 states, not including the South, where rural conditions are much worse than elsewhere. The aim was to see just how the farmer's wife spends her day, what facilities she enjoys and lacks, and what the causes of her discontent are. As you scan the findings, bear in mind that the homes described are not those of the poverty-

stricken hill billies and white trash. They are typical farm homes in the prosperous farming sections of our land. The working hours of the average farm woman proved to be 11.3 hours, the year around. In summer it is 13.12 hours! Out of every 100 women, 87 never took any vacation. On a summer day the farmer's wife can find only 1.6 hours of leisure; in winter she manages to get 2.4 hours a day for herself.

Six out of every ten do not even have a pump in their kitchens, but must walk some distance to the spring or well to fetch water for cooking their meals and for washing. Each woman has, on the average, a seven-room house to care for; kerosene lamps to trim and fill; family washing to do, without any washing machines; and just to keep her out of mischief, all the family sewing and darning to do. In addition to caring for the house, cooking all meals and caring for the children, the farmer's wife usually takes full charge of the poultry and does all the baking for family and farm hands. One woman out of four also helps care for the live stock. One out of every five also toils for six weeks each year in the fields, helping with the planting and harvesting. One out of every three helps with the milking. And more than half of them all must do all the churning.

How can intelligent or frail women endure this? They must leave.

WHAT IS LIME? *

by Charles Kingsley

I shall presume in all my readers some slight knowledge about lime. I shall take it for granted, for instance, that all are better informed than a certain party of Australian black fellows were a few years since.

In prowling on the track of a party of English settlers to see what they could pick up, they came—oh joy!—on a sack of flour, dropped and left behind in the bush at a certain creek. The poor savages had not had such a prospect

* From C. Kingsley, *Town Geology*.

of a good meal for many a day. With endless jabbering and dancing the whole tribe gathered around the precious flour-bag with all the pannikins, gourds, and other hollow articles it could muster, each of course with a due quantity of water from the creek therein, and the chief began dealing out the flour by handfuls, beginning of course with the boldest warriors. But, horror of horrors, each man's porridge swelled before his eyes, grew hot, smoked, boiled over. They turned and fled, man, woman, and child, from before that supernatural prodigy; and the settlers coming back to look for the dropped sack, saw a sight which told the whole tale. For the poor creatures, in their terror, had thrown away their pans and calabashes, each filled with that which it was likely to contain, seeing that the sack itself had contained, not flour, but quicklime. In memory of which comi-tragedy, that creek is called to this day, "Flour-bag Creek."

Now I take it for granted that you are all more learned than those black fellows, and know quicklime from flour. But still you are not bound to know what quicklime is. Let me explain it to you.

Lime, properly speaking, is a metal, which goes among chemists by the name of calcium. But it is formed, as you all know, in the earth, not as a metal, but as a stone, as chalk or limestone, which is a carbonate of lime: that is, calcium combined with oxygen and carbonic-acid gases. In that state it will make, if it is crystalline and hard, excellent building stone. The finest white marble, like that of Carrara in Italy, of which the most delicate statues are carved, is carbonate of lime altered and hardened by volcanic heat. But to make mortar of it, it must be softened and then brought into a state in which it can be hardened again; and ages since, some man or other, who deserves to rank as one of the great benefactors of his race, discovered the art of making mortar. This discovery was probably very ancient; and was made probably, like most of the old discoveries, in the East, spreading westward gradually.

But I must return, and tell my readers, in a few words,

the chemical history of mortar. If limestone be burnt, or rather roasted, in a kiln, the carbonic acid is given off—as you may discover by your nose. The lime then gives off its carbonic acid, and also its water of crystallisation, that is, water which it holds (as do many rocks) locked up in it unseen, and only to be discovered by chemical analysis. It is then anhydrous—that is, waterless—oxide of lime, what we call quicklime: that which figured in the comi-tragedy of “Flour-bag Creek”; and then as you may find if you get it under your nails or into your eyes, it will burn and blister like an acid.

The lime has to be turned again into a hard and tough artificial limestone, in plain words into mortar; and the first step is to slack it—that is, to give it back the water which it has lost, and for which it is, as it were, thirsting. So it is slacked with water, which it drinks in, heating itself and the water until it steams and swells in bulk, because it takes the substance of the water into its own substance. Slacked lime, as we all know, is not visibly wetter than quicklime; it crumbles into a dry, white powder in spite of all the water which it contains.

Then it must be made to set, that is, to return to limestone, to carbonate of lime, by drinking in the carbonic acid from water and air; which some sorts of lime will do instantly, setting at once, and being therefore used as cements. But the lime usually employed must be mixed with more or less sand to make it set hard: a mysterious process, of which it will be enough to tell the reader that the sand and lime are said to unite gradually, not only mechanically, that is, by sticking together; but also in part chemically—that is, by forming out of themselves a new substance, which is called silicate of lime.

Be that as it may, the mortar paste has now to do two things; first to dry, and next to take up carbonic acid from the air and water, enough to harden it again into limestone; and that it will take some time in doing. A thick wall, I am informed, requires several years before it is set throughout,

and has acquired its full hardness or rather toughness; and good mortar, as is well known, will acquire hardness with age, probably from the very same cause that it did when it was limestone in the earth.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE AND CHOICE OF WORDS

THIS book itself is an example of exposition, and may properly be tested by the standards that have been laid down in the preceding chapter. Has it made clear all the ways and means by which expository writing may be made clear? Obviously not. It has only laid down a few general principles that can be applied to certain familiar and useful forms of exposition. A first lesson in playing the violin does not entitle one to a place on the local dance orchestra, though sometimes the music might lead one to think so; nor does an afternoon's coaching in chess qualify one for a place on the college team. There are as many points to the game of writing as to playing a violin or chess; perhaps more. A textbook can teach, and a student can learn clarity, force, and charm only by degrees.

We shall consider in the next few chapters the various structural elements or component parts of a piece of expository writing, namely, words, sentences, and paragraphs. First let us see what is the nature of words, and how we may select them to secure clarity, force, and charm.

THE HUMANITY OF WORDS

Words are very much like human beings. Until we realize that, we can never have the proper feeling for them, we can never master them. But the fact is, they are very much alive; they have fathers and great-aunts, ancestors ancient as the Pharaohs; they have individualities of their own and at the same time are colored by their environment; they rise and fall in the social scale; they die and sometimes are resurrected. And one who uses words must know something of their history. Ruskin says of the well-educated man that "he is learned in the peerage of words, knows the words of true descent and ancient blood, at a glance, from words of modern *canaille*; remembers all their ancestry, their intermarriages, distant relationships, and the extent to which they were admitted, and offices they held, among the natural noblesse of words at any time and in any country."

Words, as they appear before us on the printed page, seem lifeless patterns in black ink stamped on bleached and compressed wood-pulp. If they squirm or show any other sign of life, it is our eyes that are playing tricks, not they. Yet words, we have seen, have power; half a dozen abstract words have more power in the world to-day than half a million ordinary people. Pronounce the word "communism" in a Park Avenue or Back Bay drawing room, and the atmosphere becomes electric. The words "pacifism" and "rugged individualism" will raise blood pressures almost anywhere in the United States. Words are charged with vitality.

Words, like us, have ancestors, and some of their

pedigrees would set among *parvenus* the most blue-blooded Duke of Plaza-Toro, with his ninety-five quarterings, not to mention descendants of the Mayflower immigrants.* To be sure, here and there a word like *blurb* or *gas* may spring straight from the brain of its inventor, and it is easy to realize that *boom* burst from the mouth of a cannon, and *purr* issued from the vocal organs of a cat. But the great bulk of our language has a long ancestry that takes us back a thousand years or more to France of the Dark Ages, to the forests around the mouth of the Elbe, to Rome, imperial and papal, to Athens with its diadem of temples. A few words like *garden*, *oxen*, *wheel*, *mother*, *thunder*, *star*, go back to the years about 2000 B.C., when the common ancestors of Frank and Saxon, Roman and Greek were living a barbaric life along the banks of the Dnieper, which runs down through Western Russia into the Black Sea. Strange though it may seem, *day* and *deity* have their common ancestor in that far-off time when men worshipped the sky as the sender of the lightning and the light.

Ancestral qualities are still marked in much of our vocabulary. The contribution which the Angles and Saxons brought with them from Northern Germany is, generally speaking, homely, earthy, strong, partly because they were a vigorous, direct folk; partly because these words have always been in use among the unschooled and unpretentious. Such are *wassail*, *welcome*, *loathsome*, *starve*, *merry*, *home*. Peculiarly English are the short, sharp verbs like *sting*, *writhe*, *reek*,

* See Owen Barfield, *History in English Words*, and G. H. MacKnight, *English Words and Their Background*.

stare, bite. A muscular style will always contain a high proportion of Anglo-Saxon derivatives, but to write nothing else is to be unintelligible, as William Morris proved when he translated *Beowulf* in lines like these:

The stead of the fifel
That wight all unhappy a while of time warded,
Sithence that the Shaper him had for-written.

The heirs of Anglo-Saxon ruggedness are not to be consistently preferred to the heirs of more sophisticated lineage.

Another large group of words was first brought into England in the fleet of William the Conqueror in 1066, but it did not become part and parcel of the language till almost three centuries later. *Courteous, loyal, chivalrous, grace, prowess, mercy, pity*—surely these remind us of “very, parfit, gentle knights,” while *butler, banquet, beef, banner, battlement, ballad* call up the picturesque medieval France of their origin. When an American court is opened with the call “Oyez, oyez!” it may suggest how much of the terminology of law, too, is French.

Though a few Latin words like *camp, cook, port, altar* found their way into the English language very early, it was not till the Revival of Classical Learning in the sixteenth century that Roman words crowded in in such numbers that they threatened to make the language a grotesque neo-Latin. Luckily that did not happen, but thousands of words did remain to enrich the language with something of the grandeur that was Rome. Listen to them: *colony, forum, majesty, imperial, dominion, eternity*. Or read a passage from De

Quincey: "At a clapping of hands would be heard the heart-shaking sound of *Consul Romanus*: and immediately came 'sweeping by,' in gorgeous *paludaments*, *Paulus* or *Marius*, girt around by a company of *centurions*, with the crimson *tunic* hoisted on a spear, and followed by the alalagmos of the *Roman legions*."

We in America have a special debt to the Latin language, for just as our colonial architecture retained in its fluted columns, pediments, and porticos the marks of classical descent, so the founders of this nation, when they christened the Senate and the Capitol, deliberately recalled the institutions of that older republic. Republic itself, both thing and word, is Roman.

The Revival of Learning commenced that influx of Greek terms into our thinking life and our inventive science which still goes on to-day. It is only natural and just that the terminology, the instrument, of our thought should be largely Greek, since the spirit, the impulse to think fearlessly and trenchantly is also largely inherited from Greece. If we speak of *logic*, *democracy*, *geometry*, *axiom*, *analysis*, it is because the ancestors of these words, so essential to our intellectual life, were on the lips of men whose minds Socrates disciplined and Aristotle systematized. That most abused of words, *ideal*, gets all its true and lofty meaning from Plato. The practice of modern pioneers in science to call their discoveries by Greek compounds is only a fair tribute to the language which Archimedes, Euclid, and Galen used.

Our words, then, have pedigrees, and it is true that they tend to inherit something from their ancestors. Just as you often get a new insight into a man's char-

acter when you discover his antecedents, his family background, and exclaim: "That explains it!" so it is often with words; their ancestry accounts for much. But ancestry is by no means a sure guide with words, any more than with human beings. French words often possess charm, but some of the more recent importations are silly or pompous affectations. Latin words may have a stately tread, but some have the shuffling gait of the pedant. The world of language is a democracy: each individual must be judged on his own merits.

Words, like men, are the product not only of heredity but also of environment. They tend to preserve something of the atmosphere in which they circulate. A cowboy who goes to San Francisco brings with him not only his ten-gallon hat, but also his talk and manner, the atmosphere of the sagebrush. A millionaire who has contributed to the public welfare by the manufacture of cough drops or sausages cannot hope to make as good newspaper copy as the one who bought a silver mine in Venezuela. Words, too, cannot escape from their associates and associations—their connotations, as we say in rhetorical phraseology. A man may try to escape from the chilling associations of the word *undertaker* by calling himself a "mortician," just as his predecessors in the business dropped the word *funeral* from *funeral undertaker*. But the attempt is never quite successful. Just as a hostess makes a point of seeing that her guests do not bring with them conflicting atmospheres and produce a storm, so a writer must watch his words to see that he does not introduce a hobo at a polo match or a cardinal at a Masonic convention. Many a word that is appropriate and effective

in the pulpit, the office, or the laboratory would be for that very reason absurd or catastrophic out of its accustomed environment. It is part of the case against slang, that it brings the atmosphere of the poolroom into discussions that demand dignity, or into situations that are steeped in romance. One of the first duties of one who handles words, as it is of one who handles men, is to know what company they keep, in what environment they belong.

Words, like men, often possess a character that neither heredity nor environment explains. Vigor and charm cling to some words for no apparent reason, while others are flabby and colorless. Why is *dynamic* more dynamic than *forceful*, and *grief* more grievous than *sadness*? As well ask why Persis is gayer than Carlotta. Often the answer must be that no one knows why, but the fact remains. Of two words meaning exactly the same thing, one is full of life and power, the other is dull, insipid. Now dull, plain words have their place in the routine of business or the straight transference of information. One does not want a vivacious vocabulary in asking for a cake of soap or in writing a biographical sketch for the employment office. But it does make a difference whether, in advertising, the soap is described as "pure, translucent, moulded in a lovely shape," or "unadulterated, clear, put up in a nice-looking cake"; or whether a magazine article says of a woman, "A childlike mirth leaped and danced in her"; or merely, "She was a very lively sort of person." To know, study, and treasure up vital words, to know when to use them and when not to use them, is to understand verbal psychology.

Force and beauty are not constant qualities in men and women, and words, too, have their ups and downs. The "elegant females" of Fenimore Cooper have long since passed off the stage, and so have the words themselves except as grotesque survivals. Some strong words of ten or twenty years ago overstrained themselves so that they are now practically done for. *Gripping* has lost its grip; *devastating* no longer devastates; it is rapidly becoming moronic to use the word *moron*. It has been paradoxically said that the best service one can do for a delicately beautiful or uncommonly powerful word is not to use it. Certainly to ride it too hard is to ruin it. Slang has this among its other defects that when it is most picturesque and striking, it is most likely to be killed by its popularity. *Skedaddle*, *skidoo*, *spondulix*, *jack*, *mazuma*—they are antiques within a few years after they are born. A vocabulary of standard English has, as the insurance companies say, a much longer prospect of life.

This vocabulary is always being increased by newcomers. There is nothing static about our language. The new words are recruited from foreign tongues, from science, from the best slang, from old-timers who have come back. *Flapper*, originally mere slang for girl, was rapidly adopted into the language to fit a new type of girl. Old words like *oaf*, *mountebank*, *balderdash* Mr. Mencken has brought back to life.

The world of words is a stirring, pulsating microcosm. He who writes must watch and understand it. He must be wary of the flashy parvenu; he must be quick to note when an interesting and forceful personality turns up so often that he becomes a bore; he

must not neglect the ancients who have possibilities of healthy vigor in them. Though these words may seem mere pawns in his game, the writer will find them playing tricks on him if he is not careful. As for temperament, some words seem to know quite well what is expected of the artistic nature. And all of them are human. Even *and*, that hardly millenarian, can be overworked.

EXERCISES

1. The two paragraphs following are taken from the works of Thorstein Veblen and William Morris, respectively. Using a good dictionary, find out the number of words of Anglo-Saxon or Norse origin in each paragraph, and figure out its percentage of the total number of words in the paragraph. Then find out the number of words of Latin or French origin in each paragraph, and calculate likewise what proportion that number bears to the total. Point out how the vocabulary influences the impression the two authors make upon you.

The immediate end of this pecuniary institutional structure and of its amelioration is the greater facility of peaceable and orderly exploitation; but its remoter effects far out-run this immediate object. Not only does the more facile conduct of business permit industry and extra-industrial life to go on with less perturbation; but the resulting elimination of disturbances and complications calling for an exercise of astute discrimination in everyday affairs acts to make the pecuniary class itself superfluous. As fast as pecuniary transactions are reduced to routine, the captain of industry can be dispensed with. This consummation, it is needless to say, lies yet in the indefinite future. The ameliorations wrought in favor of the pecuniary interest in modern institutions tend, in another field, to substitute the "soulless" joint-stock corporation for the captain, and so they make also for the dispensability of the great leisure-class function

of ownership. Indirectly, therefore, the bent given to the growth of economic institutions by the leisure-class influence is of very considerable industrial consequence. (T. Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*. The Macmillan Company.)

But thou hast told me that hardly in these days may a poor man rise to be a lord: now I tell thee that in the days to come poor men shall be able to become lords and masters and do-nothings: and oft will it be seen that they shall do so; and it shall be even for that cause that their eyes shall be blinded to the robbing of themselves by others, because they shall hope in their souls that they may each live to rob others; and this shall be the very safeguard of all rule and law in those days. (William Morris, *Dream of John Ball*. Longmans, Green & Company.)

2. Find out from the *New English Dictionary* in what language the following words originated; and then after consulting an encyclopedia, explain why the source is appropriate and significant; algebra, ideal, chivalry, taboo, prima donna, rhetoric, rucksack, imperial, coquette.

3. What is the atmosphere or connotation (not the meaning) of the following words and phrases: slogan, pagoda, saxophone, worth while, calico, lullaby, vest, phalanx, eleemosynary, ducats, pianola, asafetida, senate, juggernaut, assets, lariat, jade?

4. Write a list of ten slang expressions which you have used, but which you no longer use because they are stale.

5. Write a theme on American proliferation of slang words meaning "twaddle": *blah*, *bunk*, *applesauce*, *flapdoodle*, *baloney*, *ballyhoo*, *hot air*, and so forth.

ACQUIRING A VOCABULARY

It becomes obvious from our discussion of the nature of words that the writer must be able to pick and choose among those best fitted to his purpose. He must

have a host of words at his beck and call; he must acquire a rich vocabulary. How is he to do it? To read the dictionary from *butterbump* to *buzzer* is not likely to prove profitable since words unused are likely to fade out of the mind. Besides, it is too much like sitting down to baked beans without an appetite. It is only when one has a craving, a void to satisfy, that one consults a wordbook with much pleasure and profit.

The first requisite for acquiring a vocabulary is to feel the need of one. If you will continue with your roommate that discussion started in the class, or will try to reproduce in your letter home your sensations in the rush, you will soon find something lacking. The more you try to talk or write well on subjects that cannot be covered by a little elementary English and a sprinkling of slang, the more you will feel that aching void. Once acquire that sensation, and you will absorb words as automatically and painlessly as a vacuum cleaner absorbs dust when the current is turned on. You have taken the first, all-important step towards learning the resources of your own language.

As you read now, words and phrases will not merely pass through your brain and out again, but will tend to stay, waiting their chance for service. Professor Lowes in his exquisite book, *The Road to Xanadu*, shows how Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* is a miraculous springing into a new and transcendent life of remembered phrases from various narratives of travel and discovery. Coleridge had read certain books in which these phrases occurred: "the sun is no sooner dipped"; "the stars darted forward"; "the dark comes on very suddenly"; "there is no twilight." Uncon-

sciously bringing together these images and words from widely scattered sources, Coleridge composed the eerie lines:

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark—

and the gloss: "No twilight within the courts of the Sun." The genius who can turn the undistinguished words of his reading into an enchanter's spell is as rare as the phoenix, but we, who cannot weave an incantation, can at least absorb from books words of power and grace.

But there are other steps to be taken, too, which will hasten the process. You can make a collection of words. As you listen to a distinguished lecturer, you may kill two birds with one stone, by jotting down not only the content of his discourse but also the striking words and phrases. As you read a master stylist, you may do the same. In either case, look over the list afterwards. A genius like Bernard Shaw confesses that he made a practice of treasuring and using "the jewels of unconsciously musical speech which common people utter and throw away every day"; and he actually represents Shakespear, the greatest master of the language, going about, tablet in hand, jotting down those inimitable phrases that seem to have dropped so easily from Elizabethan lips.

THE BEEFEATER. You judge too much by the court, sir. There, indeed, you may say of frailty that its name is woman.

SHAKESPEAR. (*Pulling out his tablets.*) Prithee say that again: that about frailty: the strain of music.

BEEFEATER. What strain of music, sir? I'm no musician, God knows.

SHAKESPEAR. There is music in your soul; many of your degree have it very notably. (*Writing.*) "Frailty: thy name is woman!" (*Repeating it affectionately.*) "Thy name is woman."

BEEFEATER. Well, sir, it is but four words. Are you a snapper-up of such unconsidered trifles?

SHAKESPEAR. (*Eagerly.*) Snapper-up of—(*Gasps.*) Oh! Immortal phrase! (*He writes it down.*) This man is a greater than I.*

When Shaw confesses to the use of pad and pencil as a means of enriching his vocabulary, perhaps some of us may not be above snapping up such unconsidered trifles.

But never forget: the separate word is public property, and the phrase or sentence so long as it is merely spoken; but once written or printed, the striking, individual phrase and sentence are no longer public property, but private. They should be borrowed only in quotation marks. Beware lest in emulating Shakespear, you emulate instead Autolycus, the professional snapper-up of other people's trifles.

When a student has begun to hunger for words and to collect them, he will naturally feel the need of more information about them, just as the collector of stamps or old furniture wants to know the details of their history and their value. Needless to say, the one indispensable work is a good dictionary. The miniature pocket dictionary is almost worthless except for indications of spelling and pronunciation; it attempts to

* From G. B. Shaw, *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*. Brentano's. By permission of the author.

handle meanings by suggesting one or two vague synonyms, that are as likely to mislead as not. If one has leisure and a good reference library available, and if one wants the completest information on any word, he will find it in the monumental *New English Dictionary* (sometimes called the *Oxford English Dictionary*). This supplies the complete history of a word from its remotest traceable origins down through all its varying senses till our own time. Exceedingly useful as a guide to accuracy are the illustrative quotations. For one who is interested in the romance of words and their adventures through the ages, the *New English Dictionary* is an inexhaustible treasury.

A more practical type of dictionary for student use is the *Collegiate Standard*, *Webster's Collegiate*, or *Winston's Simplified Dictionary*. Less expensive is the *Pocket Oxford Dictionary*. In these are to be found the answers to most simple problems that will confront the writer in the use of words.

First, he will find the spelling authorized by the best current usage. English spelling is one of the supreme irrationalities of the universe. It is the price we pay for the fact that we enjoy greater verbal resources than any two other peoples. We have borrowed wholesale from a dozen languages, and have tended to preserve the original spelling of each word, no matter how we pronounced it. If the word *circumference* were to be spelled in the various ways which the spelling of other words would justify, it could furnish 450,000,000 different spellings. Such is the consistency of our orthography! But there is no doubt that general society, not merely schools and academies of learning,

regard a rather intimate acquaintance with spelling as the first test of one's acquaintance with books. The student must be held up to the standards of literary correctness which the public prescribes.

Second, a dictionary will give the pronunciation current among the best educated classes. One may learn that *route* is identical in sound with *root*; that *exquisite*, *despicable*, *hospitable*, and *lamentable* are accented on the first syllable, *address*, *romance*, and *research* on the second; that the *t* in *often* and the first *a* in *extraordinary* are silent.

Third, a dictionary indicates by such abbreviations as *n.*, *v.*, *adv.*, the part of speech to which a word belongs. For instance, some people need to learn that *real*, *mighty*, and *good* are adjectives, and that "real cute," "mighty swell," and "My history teacher lectures good," are altogether reprehensible in the eyes of Noah Webster and the lettered public.

Then comes the derivation. There is, though one might not suspect it, poetry and point in these strange-looking symbols. "Even the plainest-looking words," as Mr. Eastman says, "will sometimes reveal to one who likes them well enough to look for it, a lucid perception out of which they sprang. *Sarcasm* is 'a tearing of the flesh.' And we may contrast it, for our purpose, with *irony*, which means 'saying little—saying less than you mean,' one conveying an acute experience, the other a practical analysis. . . . *Retort* is 'a twisting back.' *Enthusiast* is 'full of God.' . . . Such is the poetry which you find in the dictionary, the unpremeditated art of men for centuries dead, whose utterance in a vivid moment rose to heights of

genius and could not be forgotten." * How much it adds to one's abstract vocabulary to realize that *persiflage* meant "whistling," *pondering* meant "weighing," and *prevarication* meant "straddling." Every cultured person has a sense for the undertones of words, for their basic meanings. He resents such a confusion of metaphors as is implied in the sentence: "In the fundamentals of character he towers high above his classmates." This is a dubious compliment, for *fundamentals* suggests foundations, and foundations that tower are dangerous. Likewise, there is absurdity in the remark, "Her penchant for art shot up like a sapling under Pyle's influence"; for to every person who knows French, *penchant* calls up *pencher*, "to lean"; and a leaning does not become more pronounced by shooting up. Of course, many words that were originally figures of speech have ceased altogether to call up any image whatsoever, and they can be used without regard to derivation. One speaks of "talents" without suggesting the glitter of coin. Often, too, words grow away from their roots, and new senses are grafted on. Who has not heard that mischievous platform commonplace, that *education* means "leading out"? Here are two thumping errors. First, *education* has not had the sense of "leading out" for two thousand years, and very likely never meant "drawing out a person's innate abilities." Secondly, the merest common sense will tell us that education which does not pour in as well as draw out is likely to pump the cistern dry. There is no worse service one can do a clever young man or woman than to

* From Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Poetry*. Charles Scribner's Sons.

encourage the belief that the end of education is not to learn anything, but to display one's native endowment of untested ideas and untutored arts. In sum, there is often power in knowing the derivation of a word, and danger in not knowing it. Do not despise the etymology, but do not accept it as a sure basis for present meanings.

For that reason, no dictionary is complete that does not furnish exact definitions of a word in its various senses. To discover these meanings is, or should be for college students, the commonest occasion for consulting a dictionary. Many would do well to look up at once the correct sense of *alibi*, *aggravate*, *disinterested*, *ingenuous*, *imply*, *infer*, *mystic*, *tortuous*, and *unique*. College students cannot afford to sound too much like Mrs. Yifnif calling down the dumb-waiter.

MRS. YIFNIF. You should see a easiness wit weech dey subtract a toot. Dey got it a invention wot it makes de faze ebsoluteleh indispensable to pain—

MRS. FEITLEBAUM. Witt mashinnery dey pulling dem out, ha?

MRS. YIFNIF. Who's talking from mashinnery? Wit a local esthetic.

MRS. FEITLEBAUM. Wot is?

MRS. YIFNIF. Is so. Dey got a soitin kind stoff wot it pallorizes de noives. . . . Is ebsoluteleh devoid from cessation.*

From "howlers" such as Mrs. Yifnif's a good dictionary will save you.

Many dictionaries include after certain words a list of synonyms and near-synonyms. These lists may add

* From Milt Gross, *Nize Baby*. Doubleday, Doran & Company.

greatly to the smoothness and accuracy of your diction. You may be tired of using the word *strong*, or its repetition threatens to become awkward. Turn to the word. As equivalents you will find under the definition such words as *powerful, muscular, robust, vigorous, energetic, violent, forceful, firm*. Under synonyms you will also find *hardy, brawny, sinewy, compact, concentrated*. In this list you will certainly find words that could be substituted for *strong*. Or your problem may be to discover a word that expresses more accurately than any you can think of, your exact shade of meaning. Here again, the list of synonyms that you find under a word that roughly corresponds will afford suggestions. For example, under *pride* you will find words denoting all the varieties of satisfaction with oneself; *superciliousness* may serve your need, or perhaps *arrogance*.

In this connection one should also learn to know and use two other important word books besides the dictionary: Roget's *Thesaurus of Words and Phrases* and Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*. The first is a more elaborate book of synonyms, and may be used as follows. Select some word containing the general idea you wish to convey, and look it up in the index at the back. There you will get a numbered reference to one or more sections containing not only one part of speech expressing that idea—for example, the nouns—but also adjectives, verbs, and whole phrases.

Fowler's book is the latest authority on discriminating modern usage. It is not a dictionary in the ordinary sense of the term, but a reference work alphabetically

arranged, in which one may find not only words that are frequently mispronounced or misused, with instructions for their proper treatment, but also pithy, sensible, and often amusing remarks on matters of taste in diction. For instance, one will find discussed the distinction between *faun* and *satyr*, and between *effective*, *effectual*, *efficacious*, and *efficient*; hackneyed phrases; the split infinitive; "vogue words"; "pairs and snares"; working and stylish words. Under metaphor, Fowler gives some good examples of mixed metaphor: "All the evidence must be sifted with acid tests." "This is not the time to throw up the sponge, when the enemy, already weakened and divided, are on the run to a new defensive position." Any one who takes writing seriously enough to be interested in accurate and refined diction should know and use Roget's *Thesaurus* and Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern Usage*.*

EXERCISES

1. Find out in the *New English Dictionary* the derivation of the following words, and after consulting any reference works necessary, explain what facts in the history of thought and culture are illustrated by the derivations: *spirit*, *fee*, *pecuniary*, *paper*, *style*, *pen*, *disaster*, *influence*, *pagan*, *villain*, *humorous*, *dunce*, *Gothic* (architecture).

2. List 25 unfamiliar words from Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* in *Modern English Readings*, and using a good dictionary, place opposite each word a full interpretation in the sense which the context calls for.

3. Study Diction in the Handbook, and be prepared to explain the difference between *credible*, *creditable*, and *credu-*

* Other useful books on modern usage and the development of vocabulary are: A. G. Kennedy, *Current English*, and S. Stephenson Smith, *The Command of Words*.

lous, domineer and dominate, affect and effect (verb), discomfort and discomfiture, tortuous and torturing, infer and imply, disinterested and uninterested, partake and participate, ingenuous and ingenious. Write out sentences, not copied too closely from the Handbook, in which each word is used correctly.

4. Read the sections of Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* on: -*edly, etc.*, hackneyed phrases, illiteracies, incongruous vocabulary, *lay* and *lie*, metaphor, periphrasis, vogue words, working and stylish words. Then point out what is wrong with the following:

The girl answered embarrassedly.

When night came, the hen was still laying on the doorstep.

That is a most intriguing novel.

His errors of taste, etc., were distressing.

I imagine a Napoleon of the pen haunting the hoary vestiges on the sands of Time.

Business was hectic this morning.

He never straddled fences; he took them like a hunter, and kept on his own side of the fence, however unpleasant he found it.

The noise don't aggravate me like it used to.

The absence of information is an indication of satisfactory developments.

This squeezing of a nation for tribute, like the squeezing of a bladder filled with fiery fumes tends to crack and then explode, was slowly but surely cracking the power of England over the colonies, until it burst with all the fury of a volcano which has held its fire too long.

I never do well in literary studies as rhetoric, literature, French, etc.

Karl Marx's works are a gold mine of panaceas.

He stood in the sunlight, one hand gripping a tall pole, that stood like a sentinel by the side of another that looked like its twin.

5. By consulting Roget's *Thesaurus* find nouns, verbs, and adjectives conveying the ideas of insolence, ornament, laugh-

ter, and madness. Write down five of each, sixty in all.

6. Attend a lecture on a subject that is neither too familiar to you nor too technical to be beyond your comprehension. Jot down 20 unfamiliar words, and come to class prepared to pronounce them correctly and to give an exact and full definition. When the dictionary itself is not clear, it is your task to carry your research further in cyclopedias and textbooks until you can make the word as lucid as possible.

THE SELECTION OF WORDS

Thus far we have noted something of the nature of words, have seen how we may heap up what our Anglo-Saxon predecessors called a "word-hoard," have learned where precise information about any particular word is to be found. We have also seen how certain books will help us to the selection of the right word. But is there, you may well ask, no method of judging the best expression except to refer to the dictionary or to Fowler? Are there no general principles to serve as a guide? Of course, there are. They will never take the place of these books; they will never take the place of watching the master craftsmen at their work. Writing is an art, and as with singing or sculpture, there is always much that can never be learnt from rules. Nevertheless, some rules for the selection of words may serve as a rough guide.

1. Prefer the specific to the vague word. The man who mentions "the Bible story of the money" leaves his hearers wondering what he is talking about, whereas the man who refers to "the Gospel parable

of the talents" is understood at once. Why? Because *Gospel*, *parable*, and *talents* are all more limited, more precise than *Bible*, *story*, and *money*. In the interests of clarity, be specific.

2. Prefer the concrete to the abstract word whenever there is danger that your style is getting too intellectualized, too unimaginative, too far away from the color and the throb of life. No one can escape the use of abstract words like *progress*, *student government*, *professionalism*, *relativity*, *Hellenism*, *parasitic*, *eschatology*, *sentimentalize*. In fact, a fairly reliable test of a man's progress as a thinker consists of the number of abstract words he understands. But it is also a fairly reliable test of his effectiveness as a writer to see how readily and naturally he translates the abstract idea into concrete terms. Words that evoke visions, that echo the sounds and give us the sense of a real world, words that, passing through the long corridors of the brain, startle into life the dormant memories of vivid experience—these are words that make for charm and force. Say that the professors of Oxford are not pompous pedants but enjoy the simple pleasures of life, and you have made your meaning clear, but it remains abstract. Say, as Mr. Coffin does, that they "drink ale, crawl under hedges, wear old clothes, and eat strawberry jam and cheese with diggers and ditchers in village inns"; and you have not only made your meaning clear, but have lent it some of the force and charm of visualization. When your purpose is merely informative, the abstract word will do. When your purpose is to entertain as well as inform, feel after the concrete word.

3. Prefer the strong to the anæmic word when you wish to produce a strong effect. As we have already seen, words are as different as people in their vitality and strength, even words that have precisely the same meaning. *Scoundrel* is stronger than *evil-doer*; *vengeance* than *retaliation*; *holy* than *sacred*; *ghost* than *spirit*; *drudge* than *work*. Force of style lies largely in the choice of strong words.

4. Avoid pretentious words and phrases. We all know people who pretend to be ladies of fashion when they are laundresses, counts when they are absconding bank clerks. Some words belong in the same category, and the people who use them run the risk of being placed in it. It smacks of pretentiousness to say "Have you had sufficient?" when you mean "Have you had enough?" or *commence* when you mean *begin*, *previous to* when you mean *before*. These are cut out of the same cloth as *tonsonial parlor*, *nether limbs*, *emporium*, *splendid location*, *Old Sol*, *downy couch*, and all expressions which attempt to cover plain, simple, everyday matters with gaudy language.

5. Avoid hackneyed words and phrases. We saw a few pages back that it does not take many years of hard usage to reduce a fresh, vigorous word, especially an adjective, to a nonentity. *Attractive*, *interesting*, *worthwhile*, *nice*, *clean-cut*, *weird*—use these adjectives sparingly if at all, for they are worn-down coins, defaced dies, blunted swords. Avoid altogether such trite expressions as "sleep the sleep of the just," "filthy lucre," "great minds run in the same channel," "fair sex," "met with a great ovation," "the crowd went wild," "straight as an arrow," "pretty as a picture,"

“like water off a duck’s back,” “warbling brooks,” and “the higher things of life.”

6. Prefer the words that fit the context, that have the right connotation. We have already observed that words possess as much atmosphere as the persons that use them, and it is dangerous to introduce them where they do not belong. For example, the word *azure* is a synonym of *blue*, but it would be the height of absurdity to speak of “an azure bathtowel.” *Azure* is an aristocrat of the most exclusive sort: it belongs only among marble temples, glittering mosaics, and rich brocades, among such seas and skies as one travels far to behold. Its connotation is not commonplace. The newspaper editor who, during the campaign in Palestine, composed the headline, BRITISH CAPTURE CHRIST’S HOME TOWN, struck a discord that is both painful and ludicrous. *Line* in the sense of “sphere of activity” has lately acquired a wholly commercial connotation, and, like *proposition*, should be restricted to the jargon of business. When a young woman writes, “Shakespear’s motive for composing his plays was the fact that he could make a fortune in that line,” she should be informed that literature is not her “line,” and that she had better take up household science instead. She may have excellent taste in waffles, but none in words.

These rules, as has been said, are but rough guides. If used without intelligence, they may lead to gibberish; a genius may break them all and write literature. It cannot be said too often that though the power to choose and use words is partly a natural gift, in

great measure it can and must be acquired by watching the practice of good speakers and writers of yesterday and to-day. The nuances of our language are too many and subtle to be put down in one or a dozen textbooks. But there they are, in Ruskin, Thomas Huxley, Emerson, Thoreau, Stevenson, Santayana, George Eliot, Willa Cather, and a hundred others one could name; there they are for alert and sensitive minds to absorb and use.

EXERCISES

1. What principles of word selection are violated in the following?

There was a powerful king who dwelt in a radiant palace on the top of a mountain that was so very high that the communications with his subjects, who dwelt in low swamps at the foot, were deficient. When the farmers wished to carry up their produce, they had to climb first the foothills, then the rugged slopes of the mountain, then the steep peak itself, and pass through an interminable office building before they reached the king's residence. And that august potentate, glowering at the meagre victuals that they had transported to him, would shake his jeweled sceptre at them in wrath. But finally the farmers began to make experiments in their laboratories, and there was a new birth of wonder-working knowledge. It had this practical result. They applied scientific agriculture to their swampy fields so that they abounded in the richest gifts of Mother Nature. And they built an inclined railway up to the king's palace; and that august personage in his crystal palace was mighty pleased.

2. What is wrong with the diction of the following sentences?

a. As the devouring element effected an entrance, the lurid flames lit up the doomed edifice and a sea of faces below.

b. For Adam and Eve clothes were a minus quantity.

c. Christmas books are stocked up long ere the season comes.

d. That minister is a hundred per cent efficient.

e. The bell hop received an honorarium of a dime.

f. Trained personal service possesses utility, not only as gratifying the master's instinctive partiality for good and skillful workmanship, and his propensity for the display of dominance over those whose lives are subservient to his own, but also as putting in evidence a much larger consumption of human service than would be exhibited by an untrained domestic.

g. We all extend our heartfelt sympathy to the unfortunate victim of the dastardly outrage.

h. Though the Irish are usually content with small jobs, they have won a niche in the backbone of the nation.

i. The beauty of this Irish scene is of surpassing loveliness. What treasures Nature withheld from the bowels of the rugged promontory she lavished with a free hand on its surface. Moulded in Nature's most artistic hand, the scene ever changes. Anything calculated to please the æsthetic in man appears in unending profusion. A trip westward through this fair western land will amply repay the visitor.

j. We climbed the initial slopes of the mountain.

3. Contrast the choice of words in *Day's Life with Father* with that in Peattie's *Singing in the Wilderness* as illustrated on pp. 421, 462, 466. Write a theme on the subject, using quotations whenever they are desirable.

CHAPTER IV

DEFINITION

THE NEED OF DEFINING

WORDS, we have seen, are the cards in the game called "Communication." One may win or lose on many counts. But obviously the player who does not know the precise value of his cards, who is not sure whether the queen or the jack, the king or the ace, is superior, who does not know what each card can do and cannot do, is nearly certain to lose. So in the game of communication one must know as nearly as possible what the exact value of a word is. Many words have precise meanings, meanings which every informed person recognizes at once, and which any uninformed person may find out by consulting a good dictionary. There are, of course, many other words which have several precise meanings, and these meanings again one may find clearly set forth in a good dictionary. Another considerable class of words, however, have no definite significance. They are all things to all men. In the first group are *sleigh* and *single tax*; these words have but one meaning. In the second group are *scout* and *sphinx*; these words have several different but clearly fixed meanings. In the third are *sin* and *socialism*; of these one may well ask, "What is sin?"

what is socialism?" and wait for an answer before proceeding to a discussion. The dictionary will help us little here, for within certain extensive limits these words are very shifting quantities. Probably such words made Forel, the great entomologist, regard human speech as inferior to the communication of ants through their antennæ. "The more I think about it, the more clearly I see that there are incontestable advantages about antennal language over our redundant verbiage, which leads us into error almost more frequently than it enables us to understand the truth."

The words with fixed and established meanings usually do not require definition, or if they do, an authoritative, unabridged dictionary will usually supply it. One may elaborate on such definitions by the usual methods of sound exposition. There is a great deal more to be told about a silo than this: "a pit or air-tight and water-tight tower for converting green crops into silage for use as fodder." One may go into the details of construction, the methods of filling and storing, the defects and advantages of certain types. These matters, treated systematically and clearly, may be supposed to define a silo more thoroughly, though to include them is considerably to extend the function of definition. At any rate, one need only apply the principles already laid down for clear exposition.

But to define vague and shifting terms is a more difficult matter. Here are a few samples: *college spirit*, *grind*, "*cake-eater*," *liberal*, *culture*, *romantic*, *imperialism*, *soul*, *Nature*, *God*. The interpretations that have been put upon these words are many and various. There are no binding definitions, and anyone, within

reasonable limits, has a right to say what these combinations of letters mean for him. His definition binds no one else, but it does at least make clear what he is talking about—which may be nearly absolute zero. To be asked to define what you mean by *fascism* or *individualism* is not an inquisitor's device to make you squirm, but a reminder that words that are as common as these and which you will probably be tempted to use, if you have not used them already, should mean something definite to you or should be abjured. Half the misunderstanding in the world may be traced to the slovenly use of words.

HOW NOT TO DEFINE

Suppose, then, that you are faced with the task of settling for yourself what certain familiar but loose terms mean, and let us see what mistakes you should avoid. First, if the word is one on which you are competent to have an opinion of your own, such as *progress*, *Christianity*, *education*, *college spirit*, you should not consult the dictionary, for it is the business of a dictionary when treating a broad term to be inclusive, whereas it is your business to be precise. Even if you do consult the dictionary, do not quote it except to show how far it is from being explicit and helpful. If a Christian is simply "a believer in the religion of Christ," then Mussolini and Dr. Fosdick, Al Smith and John D. Rockefeller may be termed Christians. The dictionary should not be necessary for the definition of any word that you pretend to understand, and is often quite inadequate.

Second, do not think you have defined a word when you have relied on another word containing the same root in an equally vague sense. To say that a socialist is "one who believes in the socialization of industry and commerce" clarifies nothing. The word *socialization* contains the same root as *socialist*, and means, if anything, rather less to the average man.

Third, do not define in terms that are as general and loose as the term to be defined. When your business is to set limits to the meaning of the word *education*, what good does it do to quote the dictionary: "bringing up, systematic instruction"—expressions even broader than the word *education*?

Fourth, it is bad syntax to define one verb form by a different verb form, an adjective by a noun, a noun by a temporal clause, and so forth. Forswear such blunders as: "Optimism is when a man—"; "By cultured I mean someone who is—"; "Aggravate is making more serious."

So much for the "don'ts" of definition; now for the positive aspect.

THE ESSENTIALS OF DEFINITION

The first and obvious principle is to leave no stone unturned until there is not an ambiguous word left in the definition. Asked to define *patriotism*, nine people out of ten will answer "love of country." For practical purposes this is a worthless definition. One word is highly ambiguous—*country*, which may mean one or all of three distinct things: the land, including "its rocks and rills, its woods and templed hills"; the peo-

ple who live in it; the government and institutions. If a government rides into power through the vagaries of the electoral machinery, deceptive platforms and campaign slogans, and the blindness of the electorate, and if that government is not devoted to the best interests of the people, does patriotism require that one love the government? The word *country* must be itself defined before the definition of *patriotism* is even remotely satisfactory. The first business of definition is to use only words that are clear, or else to clarify them.

The second principle is that the definition should include all that one intends to include. For example, does patriotism include acts in time of peace as well as acts in time of war? Is it compatible with friendly feeling toward other countries, and a willingness to do justice even to hostile powers? Does patriotism include supporting the government in its foreign policy, without regard to right or wrong? If these things are included, let them be explicitly set down. Then we shall know what we are talking about when we talk of patriotism.

The third principle is that the definition should exclude whatever one intends to exclude. Now a definition of *patriotism* which does not make it clear whether two suspect classes are to be excluded or not, is hardly worth the paper it is printed on. Are those who have devoted themselves to public causes in peace or war but who have reaped excessive material advantages at the expense of their fellow citizens, patriots? Are those who have worked against the government or even the popular will in a genuine belief that they were benefiting their fellow citizens, patriots? A definition of

patriotism which does not clearly indicate whether or not it excludes one or the other of these classes is deficient in the very essence of a definition.

After considering these three essentials of clear definition, one might arrive at some such interpretation of patriotism as this: "Patriotism means disinterested devotion to the highest welfare of one's people, in war or in peace, whether they are attacked from without or within. It does not mean a blind faith that the national institutions are beyond improvement or the national officials beyond reproach. It does not mean systematic depreciation of other countries, even of those that are hostile. In a word, patriotism has no quarrel with Truth; it has no quarrel with the Christian ideal of the brotherhood of man." There is no binding force in such a definition; the one thing that can be said for it is that it complies with the requirements of definition. Its terms are as clear as space permits; it definitely includes or excludes doubtful instances.

EXERCISES

1. Using the tests of a good definition set forth in the preceding pages, point out what is lacking in these attempts:

- a. Optimism is when you always see things through rosy spectacles.
- b. Faith is trust or confidence in someone or something.
- c. When a man is called a success, that means that he has succeeded in life.
- d. Communism means against the government.
- e. Poetry, to be really poetry, should appeal to the senses, the emotions, the imagination, or the intellect. It may appeal to one or more. When it combines all four appeals, it is

poetry, in the highest sense. Mr. Santayana compares poetry to the light that is diffused through a stained-glass window, but prose to the light from an ordinary window-pane.

f. Just what is meant by the word *militarism*? Just what do people mean to say when they say that this or that nation employs a militaristic policy? A few hundred years ago there were in Europe a great many small countries and a few large monarchies. Historians assert that they employed militarism. What were the conditions of those days? All these countries were fighting with one another much more often than to-day. They were therefore obliged to keep up the best armies and navies that they could afford. In more modern times Germany before 1914 was building up the greatest army in the world and a great navy. The German Kaiser wanted to rule the world. His policy was termed militarism. Now we can define militarism as a warlike policy of a government depending on its armies for strength. Militarism should not be confused with imperialism, which means a policy of territorial gain.

g. Bravery is the quality of being courageous, brave, and fearless. Many people confuse real bravery with bravado, and I will try to prove how different they are.

During the great war a drafted man of whom I know, while waiting in the trenches for the signal to go over the top, was afraid. The flashes, the awful din on every side filled him with panic. But somehow when the zero hour came and he saw his comrades mounting the ladders, he could not help following. And then in the thick of the carnage he forgot fear, and fought till he was exhausted. And later he crawled through the wire into No Man's Land to rescue a wounded man. This was an instance of bravery.

Recently, two criminals were condemned to the electric chair. Whether they were guilty of the crime for which they were convicted, I do not know, but they were guilty of many other crimes. When the time came for them to die, they appeared to be perfectly calm, protested their innocence, and declared that they were not afraid to die. Were they really

brave? Had they gone out into No Man's Land, and rescued a wounded comrade? Had they flown to France? Had they rescued someone from a burning building? No, they had done none of these acts of bravery. They were guilty of many crimes, and they gave the outward appearance of not being afraid to face their Maker. This I should call bravado.

2. Assuming the following statements to be true, what meanings would you attach to the italicized words?

a. The *knocker* and the *booster* are both essential to the improvement of a college.

b. The history of transportation is the history of *civilization*. We have come by slow degrees through the stages of chariots, ox-carts, canal boats, sailing vessels, pony express, and horse cars to our present age of railroads, steamships, electric cars, automobiles, and airplanes. Only in the mechanical age in which we live has *civilization* forged ahead at a rapid pace.

c. There is *romance* in the study of chemistry.

d. Thomas Jefferson was a *radical*, and the Declaration of Independence was a *radical* document.

e. The mind of America is overwhelmingly *materialistic*. A college is estimated by the size of its buildings, especially its stadium. A man is admired for his dollars or his loud talk. A government can "get away with" anything so long as there is an automobile to every five persons. The national heroes are the Home Run King and the most spectacular aviator. The newspapers with the largest circulation fill ninety per cent of their space with sport, sex, crime, physical catastrophes, and material achievement. When a pugilist confesses that he has read Shakespear, he loses his popularity.

3. What different meanings do the following uses of one word convey?

a. Nature is cruel, "red in tooth and claw." b. In the presence of Nature Man rises to his highest self. c. One

touch of Nature makes the whole world kin. d. To use anæsthetics is contrary to Nature.

4. Which of the following attempts at defining *socialism* serve most clearly the purpose of definition, making clear the meaning or content of a word? *

a. Socialism is a disease: its cure a term in office.

b. Socialism is that evolutionary change in the form of the government of the people which leads towards the enrichment of the lives of the greatest possible proportion of the governed. It disregards, on the one hand, the vested interests of those who have, and on the other, the outstretched grasp of those who have nothing, but desire all, and in so doing it endeavors to achieve the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

c. There are four characteristic elements in pure socialism; first, the common ownership of the means of production; second, the common management of the means of production; third, the distribution of the product of industry by common authority; fourth, private property in the greater part of income. Socialists make no war on capital, strictly speaking. What socialists object to is not capital, but the private capitalist. They desire to socialize capital and to abolish capitalists as a distinct class by making everybody, as a member of the community, a capitalist; that is, a part owner of substantially all the capital in the country.

d. Socialism is democracy applied to economics and industry.

e. Socialism is an iridescent pipe-dream of an earthly paradise, redeemed from selfishness and greed, in which superior ability, industry, and thrift will have no greater reward than mediocrity, laziness, and shiftlessness.

5. Write a definition, in 150 words, of one of the following words. Test your definition by seeing whether all the relevant cases mentioned after the word are clearly included or excluded. Cases which are of no consequence may be

* These definitions were winners in the *Forum* definition contest.

ignored or specified as irrelevant. Revise the definition so that the borders are clearly laid down.

Amateur. Does it include or exclude: a college athlete all of whose expenses are paid privately by a benevolent alumnus; one who plays professional ball in the summer but accepts no compensation for his ball-playing for the college; one who is furnished a scholarship and a "soft job" in return for his services on the gridiron; one who sings in the glee club and also receives a salary for singing in a church choir; one who has been a professional skater, inherits a fortune, goes without solicitation to college, and makes the hockey team?

Progress. Does it include a temporary rise in the stock market; an increase in population; the marketing of a new and effective beauty cream; the substitution of chain stores for individual stores; the erection of a hotel on a mountain top; the invention of a perfect poison gas; the abolition of war; the destruction of a forest to produce Sunday editions of a yellow journal; an increase of 1,000 taxicabs in a given city; the discovery of an effective cure for headaches; the discovery of a gold mine; the decrease of race antagonism; a drop in the price of radio sets; the composition of an opera as good as Wagner's *Parsifal*; shorter hours of labor; taller buildings; better taste in architecture; the discovery of the relation between mind and matter; a better understanding of the Bible?

Un-American. Does it include or exclude: amending the Constitution of the United States; regarding the English government as more directly responsible to the will of the people than ours; being received at the British court; saying "rah-ther" instead of "rather"; buying goods manufactured in Germany; buying a Paris hat instead of one just as good made in Chicago; advocating the conquest of Mexico; beating up a radical student; circulating all the evil reports one hears about a rival nation; advocating a navy that will "lick the world"; excluding Japanese or Mexicans from the country; being a Roman Catholic; joining a society of nations

formed for the purpose of avoiding war; exposing the rottenness of our legal and judicial system; admiring a clever lawyer who can find a loophole in any law for a consideration; breaking an unjust law; writing a poem on Tristram and Ysolt instead of on Harvey and Ella; putting up billboards along a beautiful highway; being a reactionary; being a radical; being a standpatter?

AIDS TO DEFINITION

While the principles of definite terms, definite inclusion, and definite exclusion of doubtful cases underlie all satisfactory definition, there are many other modes of making clearer still one's interpretation of a word. One may further illuminate (a) by example, (b) by comparison and contrast, (c) by analysis, (d) by historical background, (e) by etymology.

To give illustrations or examples adds much to the vividness of a definition. When Mr. Chesterton shows what he means by a *sentimentalist*, he uses three examples. When Professor Tugwell has completed a historical survey of individualism, and has given a general conception of the term, he gives examples of the application of individualism to the problems of the day. The weakness of this method of definition lies in selecting only the most obvious cases. When the word has a dubious but important boundary line, it does little good to produce an example in the center of the word's meaning, an example so obvious that nobody is enlightened and everyone is bored.

Let us take the word *patriotism* again. What should we say to the man who produced as examples of patriotism George Washington, a college student who vol-

unteered in the Great War, and the Dutch boy who stopped the hole in the dike with his arm? We should probably have difficulty in covering a yawn. Why? Because it is an insult to our intelligence to suppose that we do not know that these were patriots. These examples lie in the center of the definable area. On the other hand, Jesus, when he defined *neighbor* by example, took an extreme case. That is what makes the parable of the Good Samaritan not only a striking story but also an excellent definition. So an intelligent definition would inform us whether or not Edmund Burke was a patriot when he opposed his government's policy, whether Lincoln was a patriot when he attacked publicly the government of the United States for its Mexican policy, whether those Italians are patriots who do not accept the dictatorship of Mussolini. To be entirely satisfactory, definition by example must show the outlines as well as the core of a word.

Another process which is often most helpful in clarifying a word, both to oneself and others, is to compare or contrast it with other words of kindred meaning or content. One may define one's conception of God by comparing Him to a father, provided that one also defines the particular type of father. One may define a liberal education by contrasting it with vocational training. Sometimes one both compares and contrasts, showing precisely wherein one concept resembles another and wherein it differs. If one were defining socialism with any completeness, it would be almost necessary to point out wherein it agrees with communism, progressivism, and government ownership, and wherein it differs from all these systems, as well as

from capitalism. In defining the amateur spirit one can hardly escape contrasting it with the commercial spirit; in defining true religion one would naturally have something to say about false religion. There is no better training in definition than to force oneself to make sharp and clear the lines of demarcation between such frequently confused or easily confusable ideas.

Many words are like the British Empire or our own United States: they include several distinct elements. Until each of those elements is isolated and explained, the word is likely to remain vague and unreal. This method of definition one may call analysis. It is the method employed above in Exercise 4 c. Matthew Arnold's definition of culture as "the pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world; and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits," is an excellent definition of a central element in culture. But until we know more definitely what are "the matters which most concern us," culture remains a somewhat ethereal quality. Furthermore, most of us would include in culture something more than wide knowledge and free, honest thinking: what of the appreciation of music and architecture and handicrafts? what of refined manners? Are not these fairly important parts of "our total perfection"? Would not a complete analysis of culture have to include, then, besides knowledge of the best that has been thought and said in the world, and fresh and free thought, at least two other elements: a developed sense

of beauty, and good manners? Each of these elements would then be further elucidated, until the vague concept of "the pursuit of our total perfection" had become definite and concrete through analysis.

Again, words that are the outgrowth of complex historical conditions or that represent these conditions are not really understood without an explanation of their historical background. It is possible to define *individualism* without explaining the historic setting, the facts and movements which lie behind this doctrine. Yet the definition at the end of this chapter gives a more living, realistic grasp of the doctrine because it reveals what circumstances led to its expression, what persons have championed it, and why. Or take the word *puritanism* as applied to the religious beliefs and social code that prevailed in New England before the Revolution; a definition of those beliefs and of that code would be an essential part of any clear definition of *puritanism*. But until we knew something of the sources of puritanism in England, how and why it arose, we should hardly understand the phenomenon or the word. The same need for clarifying the historic background would appear in connection with literary and cultural phenomena as well as political and religious. The romanticism of the eighteenth century, the impressionism of the nineteenth, and other movements in letters and art can never be understood by a mere analysis of their principles or their product. Some glimmering we must have of how they came into being.

Finally, certain words can hardly be understood without reference to their etymology. We have seen that this is far from being universally true. The fact

that *tragedy* originally meant "goat singing," though it is of enormous interest in tracing the development of drama, gives us no inkling of the word's modern sense. Nor does the fact that the terms *buncombe*, *boycott*, and *bowdlerize* have conferred immortality upon Buncombe County, N. C., Captain Boycott, and the Reverend Mr. Bowdler, shed much light upon the meaning. But occasionally the derivation of a word is the heart of it. For example, *aristocracy* is employed in two distinct meanings. It may refer to those dandiacal, coroneted anachronisms who parade before us in *Iolanthe*, or the well-groomed lords and ladies whom the *London Illustrated News* depicts for us as they appear at the races or on the grouse-moors. That is an established sense of the word. But another sense, which every cultivated person should know, is directly based on two Greek words, *aristos*, meaning "best," and *kratia*, meaning "rule." It means, of course, "the rule of the best"—not the best-dressed. Any discussion of *aristocracy* in this latter significance must start from the etymology.

In brief, then, he who would define must be a realist, seeing that the need for definition arises out of the real fact or the real danger of confusion. It is not an academic exercise he is called on to perform; it is an attempt to meet an actual or a threatening situation. In this spirit he must ask himself: "What are the senses of this word that I must distinguish from the sense in which I mean it, in order that people will understand me? What are the other words with which it is likely to be confused? Where are the borderlines to be drawn,

and on which side do the doubtful cases stand?" There is no use in beginning to write a definition until you have faced this practical problem, carefully and thoughtfully; have noted the probable sources of bewilderment and error, and guarded against them. Write your definition. Check it by the three fundamental principles of definition: clear terms, inclusion, and exclusion. Then enliven and elaborate it by such methods as apply to the particular word. See that nothing you introduce later is inconsistent with the fundamental definition you have laid down.

Practice in defining words will steadily increase not only your powers of accurate communication, but will tighten and strengthen every part of your mental machinery. Certain difficulties of expression will disappear; people will wonder less and less what you mean, for they will know; your whole mental life will be clarified.

EXERCISES

1. Define one of the following words, and clarify it by means of contrast and example. See that the example illustrates precisely the qualities you have mentioned in your definition.

"Cake-eater," "highbrow," "smart aleck," "tea-hound."

2. After consulting reference works on one of the following movements, define it and show how its origin and development shed light on its nature: Communism; Methodism; fascism; Anglo-Catholicism; Puritanism; imagism; fundamentalism.

3. Define a *liberal education* or a *Christian* by analyzing the subject into its essential elements or characteristics, and clarifying each in turn.

4. Write a definition in 300 words of *jingoism*, or *anarchism*, or *romance*, starting with the derivation and then using any other appropriate method of clarification.

5. One who investigates a person or situation which lies under suspicion is likely to be called a "muckraker" or a "crusader" or both. Is there for you any real difference in the meaning of the words, or is it simply a question "whose ox is gored"? If there is a real difference in meaning, does it lie in the situations or in the investigators? Point it out, and describe a "muckraker" and a "crusader" resembling each other in all except the essential point of difference.

6. Define the word *temperance*, beginning with its etymology, and then showing how it has developed other senses.

MODEL DEFINITIONS

THE SENTIMENTALIST *

by Gilbert Keith Chesterton

The Sentimentalist, roughly speaking, is the man who wants to eat his cake and have it. He has no sense of honor about ideas; he will not see that one must pay for an idea as for anything else. He will not see that any worthy idea, like any honest woman, can only be won on its own terms, and with its logical chain of loyalty. One idea attracts him; another idea really inspires him; a third idea flatters him; a fourth idea pays him. He will have them all at once in one wild intellectual harem, no matter how much they quarrel and contradict each other. The Sentimentalist is a philosophic profligate, who tries to capture every mental beauty without reference to its rival beauties; who will not even be off with the old love before he is on with the new. Thus if a man were to say, "I love this woman, but I may some day find my affinity in some other woman," he would be a Sentimentalist. He would be saying, "I will eat my wed-

* From G. K. Chesterton, *Alarms and Discursions*. By permission of Dodd, Mead and Company.

ding-cake and keep it." Or if a man should say, "I am a republican, believing in the equality of citizens; but when the Government has given me my peerage, I can do infinite good as a kind landlord and a wise legislator"; then that man would be a Sentimentalist. He would be trying to keep at the same time the classic austerity of equality and also the vulgar excitement of an aristocrat. Or if a man should say, "I am in favor of religious equality; but I must preserve the Protestant Succession," he would be a Sentimentalist of a grosser and more improbable kind.

This is the essence of the Sentimentalist; that he seeks to enjoy every idea without its sequence, and every pleasure without its consequence.

INDIVIDUALISM *

by Rexford G. Tugwell and Others

One fundamental ideal or principle of social philosophy which influences legislatures and the general public in considerable degree, is that of freedom—individual liberty. This ideal is particularly in accord with our American traditions and it is surrounded by no small amount of emotional glamour; in fact it has been identified closely with patriotism and idealism itself. Looked at more closely, this idea of individual liberty discloses itself, not as a synonym for patriotism in general, but as one particular way in which certain philosophers have hoped to achieve national and individual prosperity.

The ideal of individualism was much talked of in the early nineteenth century economic discussions. It was invoked in opposition to such proposed measures as the forming of trade unions and government regulation of industry. What is the bearing of the general ideal of freedom on such particular issues in economics and government?

If we look back to the eighteenth century, we shall find

* R. G. Tugwell, T. Munro, R. E. Stryker, *American Economic Life*.
Harcourt, Brace & Company.

social philosophers preaching individual liberty under very different conditions and in opposition to very different adversaries. Locke, Rousseau, Jefferson, Adam Smith, and other apostles of liberty, when they advocated this ideal, were thinking of the outworn and irksome regulations which still hampered industry as survivals of the mercantilist régime. These regulations themselves had once served a good purpose. Strong national governments, strong kings, had been necessary in order to sweep away the medieval guilds; in order to place industry under strong, energetic, and efficient managers; in order to coördinate national finances and taxation; in order to rid the seas of pirates and to conduct exploration and colonization in the new countries.

But when that epoch had passed, when a certain amount of political stability and prosperity had been secured (that is toward the end of the eighteenth century) business men began chafing under governmental restraints. They saw that these restraints in many cases were unintelligent. The edicts made by Queen Elizabeth, for example, dictated exactly the width and weight that a piece of cloth must have, and, in fact, the exact detailed manner in which most manufacturers should carry on business. Manufacturers now believed there were more efficient methods, and demanded the right to use them. Government regulations were unfair; they favored certain classes and individuals. Court favorites, even, somewhat earlier, had been granted monopolies on the importation of certain commodities, such as pepper, silk, and wine, and there were eighteenth century survivals of this same sort of strict surveillance of business. Under these conditions it was no wonder that business men were demanding freedom to manufacture and trade in their own way without restraint. At just about this time political reformers were asserting the right of the individual to a voice in electing his government, and social reformers and poets were preaching the brotherhood and dignity of all mankind, the right of every human being to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

If we come down to about the third decade of the nine-

teenth century, we find that conditions have changed again and that individualism, although abstractly defined in the same way, really has different connotations. It connotes in 1830 the granting of still further power to middle-class industrialists. There is now hardly any question even of despotic control by landholding aristocrats. Their power, though surviving, is definitely on the wane. There is no serious objection to allowing the enterprising trader or manufacturer to start a new venture and to do pretty much as he pleases in conducting it.

But a new economic and social class is beginning to assert itself—the working class. Laborers are beginning to demand a voice in political control and a greater share in the world's new prosperity. They are beginning to protest bitterly against the low wages and unspeakable sanitary conditions prevailing in the mushroom factory towns which have grown up rapidly in response to the introduction of machinery and the great demand for its cheap products. At this time, we find business men, bankers, and factory owners appealing to the ideal of individual liberty to prevent the worker from effectually revolting against them. The cry of these captains of industry is that Anglo-Saxon traditions demand freedom of contract, the right of the individual worker to bargain directly with the individual employer. And upon this basis they argue against the intervention of trade unions between employer and employee, dictating arbitrarily to both how the employer should manage his business and under what terms the worker should work. We find these captains of industry also protesting against encroachment by the government upon business. "That government governs best which governs least," they insist. Reminding the people of past tyrannies and inefficiencies of kings and ministers of finance, they insist that the people shall not surrender an iota of their new-found liberty to any new bureaucracy. The government should keep its hands off industry, except perhaps to stand by as a policeman and intervene against the commission of the most flagrant crimes. It may perhaps prevent or punish

actual damage to life, limb, and property (especially when it is the worker who commits these offenses); it may organize an army to defend the nation against foreign powers; it may collect taxes; it may even exercise a few other such traditional functions; but it is contrary to the public interest for it to attempt in any way to supervise or regulate the conduct of industry itself or the relation between the worker and the owner of wealth.

Reformers of this period point out the terrible sufferings of the poor, of the child worker in the mines working up to his waist in water all night, the mother of a family who cannot earn enough to keep her family alive. Are these all indications that government should take a hand if alleviation cannot come in any other way? The answers of individualists here are various, but all to the same point. It is better in the long run that government should not intervene. Some men, content with the state of affairs, reply, "The poor we have always with us," and insist that typical as the condition may be, it is the will of God that this should be so; suffering ennobles, and the Lord's will should be allowed to pursue its own purposes. Selfish-minded factory owners of course resent interference with their own property rights. Even sincerely altruistic philosophers like Herbert Spencer, writing in the second half of the century, believed that government interference in these matters would, if carried to any considerable extent, do more harm than good. Governments are stupid and bungling, they said; human progress is a tremendously complicated thing, full of blind forces which will slowly but inevitably work out for the best. Let us be optimistic, hope that these things will straighten themselves out, but let us not try to rush them or to steer the course of progress too exactly or we shall do more harm than good!

There is a very real significance in the ideal of economic individualism to-day. Even though it may be impossible to secure absolute freedom of competition, it is possible to work in that general direction instead of toward building

up new and complicated social mechanisms. We can, as a general policy, try to limit government interference; we can in all disputed cases be biased in favor of the rights of an individual as opposed to those of a corporation. We can legislate against trade unions, employers' organizations, active groups of all sorts within the economic order. We can abstain rigorously from government ownership and operation in specific industries. We can, if we choose, abstain from creating a government parcel post system or we may even give over the postal system into private hands. We can pass laws against trusts and large-scale corporations and dissolve them. To-day, economic individualism means such a general predisposition in favor of increasing freedom of action for individuals and small groups in industry.

As a rule, the individualist in modern economic society is a man who is fairly well satisfied with most fundamental aspects of the present system; what he means by calling himself an individualist is not that he desires any wholesale disintegration of what is, but that he opposes the introduction of extensive socialistic schemes. He may admit, frankly, that the present system is a compromise between individualism and socialism and will defend it on that account. He will concede at the same time the advantages and drawbacks of both general ideals, but will feel that the present system contains many of the advantages of both individualism and collectivism and as few of the drawbacks of each as reasonably could be expected. His outline for a successful social order would be one that had just enough opportunity for a free competition to develop individual initiative and to permit the traditional returns to successful enterprise, but not enough to permit ruthless or excessive competition. He would favor an order in which groupings of individuals were allowed to form and function but not to become too powerful. In that way, he would say, society can be prevented from going to either extreme, toward crystallization or toward anarchy.

Such an answer seems to many the part of common sense

or moderation, the golden mean. But it must be remembered that it leaves many of the most serious problems unsolved. It ignores the arguments of those reformers who urge that the whole system is unjust and that further attempts to patch it up can only achieve the temporary pacifying of the worker. It has the proved advantage of being at least workable, or having been tested by time, whereas other schemes must depend upon theoretical claims to superiority. But it is fundamentally a surrender to the blind forces of nature. It is an admission that man is, so far, incapable of directing economic and social progress as a whole. It is the policy of muddling through which always has been acceptable as the easiest way, especially to the Anglo-Saxon world, but it is an evasion of many fundamental issues. More particularly, it is an evasion of the issue as to just what parts of industry, if any, should be allowed to move spontaneously toward further centralization, and how far. The attempt to stop centralization, by such means as the Sherman Anti-Trust Law, necessitates an active interference by government in industry, which is in itself a violation of one fundamental principle of individualism. Apparently the theory as a whole is impossible at present; some sort and degree of collective control over industry, either by governments or large corporations, is inevitable. Like all other very abstract social policies, the word individualism becomes meaningful only when we fill it in with many specific decisions, so as to indicate concretely just where the dividing line should be made between the two extremes.

CHAPTER V

SENTENCES

THE reader of this book has been reading, speaking, and writing sentences for more than ten years. He has probably had some formal instruction in what constitutes a sentence. He may even, by some rare accident, be able to reel off the official definition: "a group of words containing a complete and independent predication." It should be taken for granted that every college student knows a sentence when he sees it, and can write one or more when he needs to. But instructors in composition know that this is a false assumption, and that every batch of themes contains one or more pseudo-sentences and a considerable number of defectives and monstrosities. To eliminate these and to substitute healthy and vigorous sentences is naturally one of the aims of training in composition.

The main point to observe is that a sentence is a structure built out of words, just as an airplane is a structure built out of various metals, and as a human body is a structure built out of bone, muscle, and flesh. In the airplane, in the human body it is desirable not only that good materials be used, that all essential parts be present, but also that the assembling and arrangement enable the parts to work harmoniously, effec-

tively, even beautifully for the purposes of the organism. Only through proper adjustment of part to part in a unified structure can man or machine or sentence do its best work.

THE INCOMPLETE SENTENCE

If a sentence by definition contains at least one complete and independent predication, it must contain the two essential elements of a predication—a subject and a finite verb. The subject, a noun or pronoun, is always expressed, except that *you*, the subject of the imperative, is usually understood; as in, “Take those pickles away.” The finite forms of the verb do not include the infinitive, the participle, and the gerund. Thus, while “The audience rose” is a sentence, “the audience to rise,” “the rising audience,” “the audience having risen,” and “the rising of the audience,” are not sentences. Nor do we have a sentence if the predication is subordinated by a relative pronoun (such as, *who*, *which*, *whose*, *what*, *that*); by a relative adverb (such as, *where*, *whereupon*, *when*, *how*, *why*); or by a subordinating conjunction (such as, *though*, *if*, *after*, *before*, *because*, *that*, *as*, *unless*, *when*). The following are examples of predications subordinated in these three ways:

Introduced by relative pronouns:

who had misunderstood me
in which you have no concern
whose broad shoulders she admired
that I had left in my seat

Introduced by relative adverbs:

where I used to skate in winter
[the hour] when the ghost would appear
why Helen was late to class

Introduced by subordinating conjunctions:

if the cat howls
before he could say "Jack Robinson"
that the professor had been unfair
when the coach curses, [I get discouraged]

None of these subordinated predications, or subordinate clauses as they are usually called, constitutes a sentence, nor will a dozen of them constitute a sentence. There must be at least one independent predication, one principal clause, or we have only amputated limbs without the vital organs.

Let us now examine three typical examples of incomplete or subordinated predication.

Carefully scanning all the cases under his observation.

Here there is neither subject nor finite verb; this is simply the amputated ear or toe of a sentence. It should, of course, be returned to its place in the organic structure from which it has been severed; thus:

Dr. Peters, carefully scanning all the cases under his observation, decided that the disease was not infectious.

Here is another example:

The dream of spending the summer in England, with its moated manor houses, deer parks, walled towns, heathery moors, sculptured cathedrals; of cycling or walking, with the prospect, at each day's end, of a comfortable and picturesque inn.

This is indeed a pleasant dream, but a dream without a predicate does not get very far. You ask, very properly, "What of it?"

Examine this group of clauses:

Since Playmore College is a country club, with a pleasant assortment of "snap" courses, gently administered, so that the graduates will be able to recognize the names of Newton, Michelangelo, and Carlyle when they hear them, and to nod patronizingly.

Here there are subjects enough and verbs enough, yet all the clauses are subordinated by the conjunctions *since*, *so that*, and *when*; there is no independent predication. Let the student see to it strictly that all units of discourse which he sets off by a period, question mark, or other complete stop are sentences; and that they are properly equipped with subject and finite verb in an independent predication.

Nevertheless, in spite of all that has been said, good usage does permit us to set off by a period or other complete stop various forms of expression that are not sentences. These are:

1. Exclamations: "If only I had been there!" "A perfect day for the boat race!" "What a preposterous idiot!"

2. Rhetorical questions and answers: "Why? Because it is too late." "Never? Some day."

3. Reported conversation: "'A nice table for two?' 'Yes.' 'Here in this corner. . . . Thank you very much, sir.'"

4. Transitional words and phrases: "Another point." "To proceed with our discussion of the text."

5. Impressionistic writing, usually requiring considerable technical skill: "Dreariest continent of shot-rubbish the eye ever saw. Confusion piled on confusion to your utmost horizon's edge; obscure in illusive twilight as of the shadow

of death; trackless, without index, without finger-post or mark of any human fore-goer; where your human foot-step, if you are still human, echoes bodeful through the gaunt solitude, peopled only by somnabulant pedants, Dilettants, and doleful creatures, by Phantasms, errors, inconceivabilities, by nightmares, pastboard novroys, griffins, wiverns, and chimeras dire." (Carlyle.) "Thick handleless cups on the wet oil-cloth-covered counter." (Sinclair Lewis.)

EXERCISES

Rewrite correctly the following passages :

1. If business people have to cut prices to such a point that it will no longer pay them to exist and only the strongest will survive.

2. The Irish Eight, similar in appearance to the Plug Eight, but which has no screw or plug.

3. Beads of perspiration standing on their brows, and coal dust from top to toe.

4. From east to west in the widest part, the reservation extends four miles. From north to south about six miles.

5. The lover of photography may do worse than turn his attention to the clouds. Either using a special camera which gives a picture of the whole sky on one plate, or a pair of cameras placed some hundreds of yards apart and giving stereoscopic pictures.

6. Though I should not like to say so in public. (Substitute for the subordinating conjunction, a conjunctive adverb phrase of the same meaning.)

7. Watch Pat catch that fly. And then throw to first.

8. Sorry that I cannot accept your invitation for the dance Thursday night. Especially since I know many of the girls who are going to be there.

9. This was the headman of the village. From whom we had to obtain guides across the mountains.

10. Which goes to show that idealism must be tempered by expediency.

Of course, sentences may be complete and yet for one reason or another be ineffectual, or awkward, or downright wrong. The possible defects of sentences may be analyzed as lack of unity, lack of coherence, and lack of emphasis. A sentence lacks unity when the connection between the thoughts or impressions is casual or remote, so that the mind cannot take them in as a unit. A sentence lacks coherence when, though the thoughts are connected, the connection between the parts is vaguely or wrongly expressed. A sentence lacks emphasis when its main thought is weakened by superfluous words or by a feeble ending. To secure unity remove from the sentence the intruding or confusing elements. To secure coherence make as clear as possible the relation between the parts. To secure emphasis see that the main point is not obscured by a clutter of unnecessary words or by a feeble ending. Let us study these matters more closely.

LACK OF UNITY

The Siamese Twins

In the field of human biology the Siamese twins constituted a rare phenomenon—two persons whose bodies were attached to each other at birth and could not be separated without destroying their lives. In the field of human expression sentences resembling the Siamese Twins are unfortunately produced with frequency by careless or inexperienced writers; but fortunately the separation of the two incongruous thoughts

is a painless process and conduces to the health of both. The remedy then for lack of sentence unity is to make two sentences—or perhaps even three or four sentences—out of one. Here is a case in point:

Our botany class has been transferred to a larger room, and I like botany better than any other subject.

Here an accidental association has brought together two really unrelated ideas; the matter of classrooms has no connection with the writer's enthusiasm for petals and pistils. Even when separated into two sentences, the thoughts remain essentially distinct. They might be expressed as follows:

Our botany class has been transferred to a larger room. By the way, I like botany better than any other subject.

Sometimes a sentence violates unity, not by the close juxtaposition of unrelated thoughts, but by adding up a series of thoughts each of which is related to the next, but all of which combined leave no single impression. Such a sentence violates unity because the thought piles up until it spills over into another thought. Note the following:

The room is very large and sunny, and the typists sit at their tables, gaily punching away at the keys, for this is the busiest season of the year, when the reports have to be prepared for the meeting of the board, which usually convenes in April.

Here there are obviously two points to be made: the impression of cheerful activity in the room, and the reason for it. We should, therefore, have two sentences, phrased somewhat as follows:

In the large sunny room the typists sit at their tables, gaily punching away at the keys. This is the busiest season of the year, when the reports are being prepared for the meeting of the board in April.

Let us be clear on this matter of unity. There is no objection to including several thoughts in one sentence provided that they are properly related and can easily be taken in by the mind as a unit. In the case of the "Siamese Twins" the fundamental unity of thought is lacking, and the mind refuses to recognize the separate thoughts as more than clumsily joined together. See that every sentence, however long, conveys an impression, whether of feeling or thought, which is easily recognized and absorbed as one.

EXERCISES

Rewrite the following in such a way as to eliminate all overloaded sentences.

1. Do you like my hat, which I bought on the dock at Havana, a wonderfully exciting place?

2. The policies of New Yorkers as late as 1800 at the time of Hamilton and Burr were run by the great families precisely as in England, and it is false to maintain, as many have maintained, that it is the frontier that has given us our democracy.

3. The manager is away on business at Santa Barbara, where my aunt used to live.

4. The blank penny is now taken to another machine, which produces the raised edge on it, and thus gives the penny a great deal longer life since the raised edge protects it from wear and tear.

5. It was now found necessary for drainage purposes and in order to expedite the work, to make an incision through

the east bank, in addition to the one at the south end of the moat, the latter being insufficient so long as water remained in the lower end, where it was being retained in the hope of keeping the fish, a hope that proved later on to be impracticable.

6. Here the Patterson Monument and the old Congregational Church on the hill are especial landmarks, in the steeple of which latter the gift clock of Fanny Kemble is still marking off the hours, minutes, and seconds with a steady swing of the pendulum, christened by her "The Tongue of Time."

7. Women usually appear as Hardy's central characters, around whom he builds his novels—novels rich with description of the English countryside and the people who dwelt in it.

LACK OF COHERENCE

Even though a sentence may possess unity because all the parts contribute to one impression or thought, the connection of the parts may be grammatically incorrect or vague or misleading. The joints are defective; the members of the sentence are linked up in loose and awkward ways; the general result is deformity.

1. The Loose-Jointed Sentence

When the joint is grammatically correct and in its proper place, but is nevertheless vague in meaning or application, the sentence may be called loose-jointed. A linking word may be too loose or ambiguous in meaning, not clear and tight; or its relation to other words may be loose and ambiguous, wobbling between two possible constructions.

a. Loose Connective

Three words used frequently in loose senses are the preposition *with*, the conjunction *and*, and the conjunctive adverb *so*. *With* affords a common example of the loose connective, since the relation which it is often intended to express can be expressed far more accurately by *because of*, *in spite of*, *together with*, or *with the aid of*. Sometimes *with* is used to express a relation so vague that only a reorganization of the clause will make the meaning clear. Here are some examples:

With many factors in her favor, she abandoned her swim.

He knew that with the Perlstein Banking Corporation the project must certainly succeed.

What with the great geniuses whom we studied we were inspired for life.

These three sentences illustrate the perplexing possibilities of a vague *with*. In the first sentence *with* is rapidly recognized as meaning *in spite of*; then would it not be better to say so? In the second sentence one can only guess what the connection of corporation and project is, since *with* may mean *with the aid of* or *as applied to*. In the third sentence *with* has no legitimate meaning: the sentence should be recast as:

By the study of certain great geniuses we were inspired for life.

With, though it is a useful and necessary preposition, is a favorite connective with those who think loosely,

and should be discarded whenever another preposition or phrase expresses the meaning more exactly.

And, as a conjunction between clauses, lacks definite meaning. It is indispensable, especially in everyday conversation, when we have not time to throw our ideas into the neatest form. But a speaker who hitches every sentence to the next by a long-drawn out "And," or a writer who uses no other conjunction to bind his clauses together produces an uncomfortable effect of straggling monotony. It is good practice to see how often you can substitute for the loose *and* which connects clauses, some more exact mode of expressing relationship. Consider these loose-jointed sentences:

Jasper has a motor car, and he is on relief.

Some people are timid and are afraid that a few thousand Communists can dominate one hundred and twenty-five million American citizens, and they want the Constitution waived and they would like to see everyone who is not a rugged individualist deported or jailed.

Obviously these sentences are loose-jointed and would be immensely improved if the *and's* were eliminated and some clearer connectives employed.

Though Jasper has a motor car, he is on relief.

Some people are so timid that they are convinced that a few thousand Communists can dominate one hundred and twenty-five million American citizens, unless everyone who is not a rugged individualist is deported or jailed, Constitution or no Constitution.

The conjunctive adverb *so*, meaning *therefore*, is in good colloquial use, but its effect is decidedly loose and informal. Avoid it in formal exposition or argument,

and substitute a stronger word, *therefore*, *accordingly*, or *hence*; or use some stronger method of expressing result or inference. Consider this.

Exercise, sleep, fresh air, and plenty of vegetables and fruit are essential to health; so we should not neglect them.

We can improve the sentence by substituting *accordingly* for *so*; or by recasting the sentence, thus:

Inasmuch as exercise, sleep, fresh air, and plenty of vegetables and fruit are essential to health, we should not neglect them.

b. Loose Construction

A loose construction occurs when a word, intended by the writer to stand in one grammatical relation, may equally well be understood by the reader in another relation. The word is not clearly and firmly fixed in a definite and correct relation, and oscillates back and forth.

Pronouns often illustrate the fault of loose construction, for if the writer does not watch them carefully, they may be attached to either one of two antecedents or may even oscillate among several antecedents. The position of a pronoun and the sense of the context should always point directly to the correct substantive. Here is an illustration of a pronoun loosely used:

A committee formed to investigate cheating in examinations, which had existed for two years, finally made its report.

Now which had existed for two years—the committee or the cheating? Nobody knows or can know until the

sentence is recast and the reference of the pronoun *which* is made clear. Thus:

A committee which had been formed to investigate cheating in examinations and which had existed for two years, brought in its report.

or

A committee formed to investigate the cheating which had been going on in examinations for two years finally made its report.

Let us take another instance of a pronoun with doubtful antecedent:

George despised Roosevelt because he was a Communist.

Probably this means that George was a Communist, for it is true, of course, that Communists despised Roosevelt. But it is also true that certain astute conservatives sought to tar Roosevelt with the Communist brush, and there were simpletons who believed them. Perhaps George was one of these simpletons. At any rate the sentence leaves us mystified.

The way to correct such an ambiguity is to avoid the loose reference; do so, if possible, without repeating the noun and without using "the former" and "the latter." One might say, "George, as a Communist, despised Roosevelt"; or "George despised Roosevelt for his Communist proclivities." If such an adjustment cannot be made and there is no other way to secure clarity, repeat the noun. "The former" and "the latter" are expressions somewhat too mechanical and stiff for any but formal and official types of writing. Especially should they be avoided in narration, descrip-

tion, and the informal essay. In brief, be sure that when you use personal or relative pronouns, you leave no doubt as to what words they refer to. If necessary, repeat the noun. Never under any circumstances use the combination of pronoun and noun exemplified in this sentence: "Lucy went home to fetch her (Mrs. Blankenholme's) umbrella." Such a locution would be hard to surpass for sheer, gratuitous clumsiness.

There are other cases of loose construction besides the loose reference of pronouns. For example:

The abolition of war and, above all, poison gases would carry us far towards our Utopia.

She loves to be with children more than anybody else.

In the first sentence, the reader naturally interprets "gases" as a subject of "would carry," whereas the writer intended it to be an object of the preposition "of." In the second sentence, the reader cannot tell whether "anybody" is the object of "with" understood or the subject of "does" understood. Such errors are easy to correct; merely insert one or more words to tighten up the construction.

The abolition of war, and above all, *of* poison gases would carry us far towards our Utopia.

She loves to be with children more than *with* anybody else.

EXERCISES

Correct the following sentences:

1. With these thoughts in mind, the next step is a bold one.

2. I do not like the last chapter of your novel, which you wrote before breakfast.

3. He creates three types of the modern girl with a name for each type.

4. You can influence Lucetta more than Patrick.

5. Howard asked Professor Bixby if he would pass in astronomy, but he told him he had neglected his work and would have to report him for laziness.

6. She was proud of her singing; so she gave up college to go on the concert stage.

7. With immediate thrashing great care is taken that all the wheat is dry.

8. The Aspenwall Hotel commands a view of half the county from its roof, which in twelve years has been made into a veritable paradise by its popular owner and manager, De Witt K. Harmon.

9. Naturally, to acquire such skill requires some practice, which when once acquired is seldom lost.

10. With the seven keys illustrated, few locks of the ward lock construction would be impregnable.

11. I have been sick and have been working very hard the last few days making up; so I hope you will excuse my failure to write.

12. Tom cannot work with Jim because he is always finding fault.

13. There remains a great burden upon the students to assume their responsibilities with a zeal that will ensure the continuity of their existence.

14. The racketeers attained their ends by methods which enraged all decent people and political maneuvering.

15. If the physically and mentally unfit have children, the government should aid them.

16. That man is a labor spy and has a prison record as a counterfeiter, and he makes a living by working in factories and telling tales on his friends.

17. With this order received from Rome, we see missions beginning to spring up in and near San Francisco.

18. Her head ached badly, and she had to study all night for the examination.

19. Landon was supported by Hearst; so many people would not vote for him.

2. *The Dislocated Sentence*

The loose-jointed sentence, we have seen, is not grammatically incorrect, unless the principle that a pronoun should be placed as near its antecedent as possible be a rule of grammar. The connections or joints are there, and they are grammatically permissible. The one fault is that the relationships which should be expressed clearly are expressed vaguely, ambiguously, loosely.

The dislocated sentence, however, has a graver flaw in structure. Anatomically speaking, the bone is not only loose in its socket; it is out of the socket altogether. Grammatically speaking, the connection is not merely loose; it is wrong. We have not merely a loose construction, but a dislocated construction. The forms of dislocated structure to which we should direct special attention are three: (a) participles that modify no substantive in the sentence; (b) gerunds or elliptical clauses of which the unexpressed subject is not the expressed subject of the clause to which they are attached; (c) pronouns which have no antecedent. Let us take up these forms of dislocation in their order.*

* Since these are defects of grammar, they are also treated in the grammatical section, pp. 567-68, 583-85.

a. Dangling Participles

Participles are, as every schoolboy knows, verb formations which have the function of an adjective and must therefore modify a noun or pronoun in their vicinity. When they fail to make this connection, they are called "dangling participles." The present active participle always ends in *-ing*; the past participle often, though not always, ends in *-ed*, *-t*, or *-n*. See p. 583. Examples of dangling participles—those which do not properly modify substantives—are these:

Following the race, we left the grandstand and drank a glass of beer.

Being a tough piece of meat, I was disappointed in the steak.

Possessed of a vast number of friends, Good's death leaves a real vacancy in American life.

He lost the election, caused by his lack of a program.

These sentences may be corrected as follows:

After the race we left the grandstand and drank a glass of beer.

Being a tough piece of meat, the steak disappointed me.

Since Good possessed a vast number of friends, his death leaves a real vacancy in American life.

He lost the election because of his lack of a program.

Fowler, in the *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, tells of an amusing correspondence in which a dangling participle played an important part: "A firm sent in its bill with the following letter: 'Dear Sir,—We beg to enclose herewith statement of your account for goods supplied, and being desirous of clearing our books to end May, will you kindly favor us with check in settle-

ment per return, and much oblige.' The reply ran: 'Sirs,—You have been misinformed. I have no wish to clear your books.' "

There is also danger of placing a participle where it seems to modify the wrong substantive, as in this sentence:

Howling and gibbering, the sheriff dragged the maniac off his victim.

An apparent exception to this rule regarding participles, is made for *regarding*, *according to*, and *owing to*; these, though originating as participles, now have the function and syntax of prepositions. A real exception is also made for the participles *speaking*, *considering*, and *judging*. It is permissible to say, for instance, "Judging by his exterior, he is down on his luck"; or "The Ford is, frankly speaking, an extraordinarily perfect piece of mechanism."

b. Dangling Gerunds and Elliptical Clauses

The verbal noun, sometimes called the gerund, resembles the present participle since it ends in *-ing*, but it has the grammatical function, not of an adjective, but of a noun. For example, "*Rowing* develops the back"; "By *cribbing* once too often, Peter ended his college career in disgrace." The rule is that when the verbal noun is the object of a preposition, as in the second sentence, the unexpressed subject of the verbal noun must be the expressed subject of the clause.* The second sentence is correct because Peter is the unhappy

* There are certain exceptions to this rule regarding the gerund which may be found on p. 585.

subject of both. Neglect of this rule may lead to ludicrous results, as in the following:

After beckoning the waiter and giving our order, a plump and steaming duckling presently appeared on a platter.

The rule demands that the unexpressed subject of *beckoning* and *giving* be the expressed subject of *appeared*, namely, *duckling*. But we have yet to see the bird which was able and willing to summon a waiter and order its own conversion into a roast. Beware of sentences such as these:

Jean's thumb was cut in opening the can.

On glancing round the room, the tapestry caught my eye.

The same principle that governs the verbal noun governs the elliptical clause—that is, a dependent clause of which the subject and the main verb are omitted. The unexpressed subject of the elliptical clause must be the expressed subject of the main clause. Otherwise a dislocation results that may be as grotesque as a contortionist wrapping his leg around his neck. Look at this:

While solemnly sitting and playing the violin, one of the chair rungs cracked with his weight.

If we take this statement literally, it means that while the rung was playing the violin, it cracked! Here is the same error exemplified in somewhat less startling fashion:

Though eager to pass the course, it was not till it was half over that any realization came to him that he would have to buckle down to work.

To sum up what has been said about dislocated sentences, we can hardly do better than to urge the writer to watch words ending in *-ing*. These furnish most of the trouble. See that they fulfill the requirements of syntax.

c. Dangling Pronouns

Since everyone knows that a relative pronoun or personal pronoun of the third person must have an antecedent, a dangling pronoun is due to mere carelessness, but it is a common form of carelessness. Often one finds in the work of hurried reporters or happy-go-lucky students a *they* or an *it* * or a *which* dangling desperately, unattached and unattachable to any noun in the same or the preceding sentence. For example:

Have you heard the result of the ball game? They told me that we beat the sophomores by three runs, which puts us first in the interclass contest.

This phrasing is intelligible and permissible in conversation, but written English must conform to stricter standards. The pronouns without antecedents should be eliminated or provided with antecedents; the second sentence could be corrected as follows:

I was told that we beat the sophomores by three runs, so that we stand first in the interclass contest.

EXERCISES

Point out the dislocation in the following sentences, and rewrite them: †

* *It* is sometimes an expletive, not a pronoun, and needs no antecedent. See p. 567.

† Other dislocated sentences to be corrected will be found on p. 585.

1. When pushing the perambulator along the uneven sidewalk, the baby is likely to kick and scream.

2. By introducing the real, not the propagandist's Stalin, we become more interested.

3. This unprecedented wealth is the result of a great many other factors, which are more important than the Republican administration, when considering the causes of prosperity.

4. The skyscrapers offer the first thrill when entering the harbor.

5. Surveying the whole field, it seemed to me there was no figure so eminent.

6. My work was rendered unendurably irksome by reminding me twenty times a day that I must hurry.

7. The game was lost, 16 to 6, caused by Toll's sprained ankle.

8. On reading Conrad's *Youth* what struck me was the vivid description.

9. When balanced on my nose, I don't even notice my glasses.

10. Rocks expand on melting, which is the opposite of ice.

11. On mentioning the fact to a friend, he said I had stultified myself.

12. The application of an onion to your eyes will cause redness and tears, and accompanied by a clever sob or two, your husband cannot escape.

13. The selections have been made with the purpose of illustrating various kinds of technique, while including stories intrinsically interesting.

14. In Abyssinia they are gallant fighters.

15. Being in such a hurry, of course the taxi was late.

16. Vigilantes often violate the constitutional guarantees, but the papers seldom print it.

3. *The Lopsided Sentence*

There exists in the rural mythology of America a creature called the "side-hill gouger." Since its habitat is always on the steep slope of a hill, it has adapted itself to the terrain, and in the course of evolution its legs on the lower side have become longer than those on the upper. Thus convenience has been served at the expense of symmetry. Sentences also show lack of symmetry when two parts corresponding in meaning do not correspond in structure or syntax. They are lopsided. For example, two members of a sentence connected by *and*, *or*, or *but* should be of the same formation. If the *and* introduces a clause, it should be preceded by a clause; if it introduces an adjective, it should be preceded by an adjective; if one member of the pair is an adverbial phrase, the other should be likewise. Watch the lopsided effect here:

Frightened and hurriedly she walked up the aisle to the platform.

Frightened is a participial adjective, *hurriedly* is an adverb. The connection of the two produces asymmetry. One of the commonest forms of this defect is the so-called *and which* or *and who* clause. For instance:

A married lady in Detroit society, and who was an old friend of mine, proposed that I marry her sister.

Here *and* connects the adjectival phrase "in Detroit society," modifying "lady," with the relative clause, also modifying "lady." The parts connected by *and* do

correspond in thought and function, but not in form. Either both elements should be cast into symmetrical form, or the *and* should be omitted. Write either :

A married lady, who was a member of Detroit society and who was an old friend of mine, proposed that I marry her sister.

or

A married lady in Detroit society, who was an old friend of mine, proposed that I marry her sister.

Let us examine another example of defective symmetry:

Brown was elected, not on account of his business experience, but because he was popular.

Here obviously are two corresponding ideas connected by *but*: one is an adverbial phrase and the other a clause. Both should be phrases or clauses.

Sometimes the principle of symmetry or parallelism should be applied to more than two members. An example of broken parallel series follows:

The world is a romance for the strong, a comedy for the callous, and full of tragedy for those who are weak.

Here are three obviously similar thoughts, yearning to be cast in similar form; it seems wanton cruelty to treat them otherwise. Yet for no perceptible reason the writer has thrown away his mould when he came to the third, and adopted a new one. Only when parallelism becomes monotonous, should unnecessary variation be introduced; even then, it should be used with proper regard for the requirements of syntax.

Often lack of symmetry is due not to the absence of corresponding elements but to the misplacing of the correlative conjunction. Take this as an example:

Either I shall go home for Thanksgiving or to my grandmother's.

Either introduces the subject of a clause; *or* introduces a prepositional phrase. Correct the sentence by making both conjunctions introduce the same or equivalent parts of speech; thus:

I shall either go home for Thanksgiving or go to my grandmother's.

Here is another case of asymmetry:

Not only is wealth without intelligence and integrity parasitic, but also destructive.

Not only introduces a clause, *but also* a mere adjective. Symmetry must be restored by placing the two correlative conjunctions before the two adjectives or before two clauses; thus:

Wealth without intelligence and integrity is not only parasitic but also destructive.

or

Not only is wealth without intelligence and integrity parasitic, but it is also destructive.

Just as arm, shoulder, and knee sockets should hold corresponding bones on the right side and the left, so correlative conjunctions should always introduce similar grammatical structures.

EXERCISES

Rewrite the following sentences :

1. He owns a house not far away, but which is difficult of access.
2. When anyone says that a person is a bad teacher, he makes an ambiguous statement, since "a bad teacher" may mean a teacher who is immoral, or it also may mean that a teacher lacks knowledge or that his methods of teaching are at fault.
3. A trip to Rheims comprises not only a visit to one of the most beautiful Gothic cathedrals in France but also to one of the famous champagne cellars.
4. They found neither a safe refuge nor wherein to find peace.
5. My friend told me that the tubes were either used or their shelf life had impaired them.
6. We did so, then, to protect a few small countries and for financial reasons.
7. Will you please either stop talking or will you leave the room?
8. A crack train was caught between two bad places in the track when a dam broke and released hundreds of tons of water, and which did considerable damage to the roadbed.
9. There are two kinds of heat: penetrating, that which we get in the therapeutic lamp, and heat of connection, that which is got by the use of hot-water bottles, plasters, and liniments.
10. One can tell at a glance the approximate age, married or single, and nationality.
11. The student will acquire a lasting knowledge of the lesson and thereby solving the problem of study.

12. The police were not only called out, but also the fire department.

13. I read and enjoy other types, such as poetry, essays, books on current topics, philosophy, and on art and music.

4. The Broken-Backed Sentence

We have seen how unconscious change of the sentence plan shows itself in various ways: dislocated sentences, where such members as participles, gerunds, and elliptical clauses have lost connection with the main structure; lop-sided sentences, where members which should be symmetrical and coördinate in meaning are cast into unsymmetrical forms. Other unconscious changes in sentence plan produce what may be called broken-backed sentences.

One of the most common and most harmless types of broken-backed sentence is the result of a needless and misleading change of subject. The error is not serious; it is rather a crack than a break in the spinal column. Yet it may well confuse a reader, as in the following examples:

Before Gordon can be taught to swim, fear must be overcome.

The left foot is put firmly in the stirrup, and then grip the saddle.

In the first sentence it would obviously make for smoothness and clarity to keep the same subject throughout, and to substitute "he must overcome fear" for the second clause. The next sentence would be improved by using the active imperative throughout:

Put the left foot firmly in the stirrup, and then grip the saddle.

Do not take it as a hard-and-fast rule that a subject must remain the same throughout a sentence, for that would be absurd. But it is important to avoid such shifts in subject as those quoted above.

Far more flagrant cases of the broken-backed sentence are those which make fundamental breaks in syntax such as a change in number or in tense or in the connection of clauses. Here follow examples of each:

Hardly anyone in the Nazi concentration camps knows what the charges are against them.

M. Poiret announced, when interviewed on the incoming Paris, that the styles for next spring will be less voluminous.

Because the other guests have all gone home does not mean that we cannot stay as long as we like.

In the first sentence the error is obvious: the writer has forgotten the singular "anyone," and suddenly presents us with a plural "them" referring back to it. He should have kept his original number and used "him."

The second sentence shows a broken tense sequence. "M. Poiret announced . . . that the styles will—" must be corrected to "M. Poiret announced . . . that the styles would—"

In the third sentence the writer did not remember precisely what he had said in the first clause and accordingly began a second clause in the middle. The two correct constructions which he has confused are these:

The fact that the other guests have all gone home does not mean that we cannot stay as long as we like.

We are not to suppose that because the other guests have all gone home, we cannot stay as long as we like.

Note that there has been no illogical break between the clauses.

If you avoid awkward shifts of subject, ungrammatical changes of number, violations of tense sequence, and confused clause connections, you will be avoiding the broken-backed sentence.

EXERCISES

Rewrite the following sentences :

1. Women no longer depend on their husbands to "bring home the bacon"; she can do it perfectly well herself.

2. These lenses gradually engrossed his entire attention, and as he grinds more perfect ones, he begins to examine various things besides his linens.

3. We cook the corn fritters only five minutes in the fat, and they cook two minutes after they come out of the fat.

4. Because we happen to be richer as a nation than other peoples who do not enjoy our natural resources does not justify our pharisaical attitude.

5. When the spring has come, we went picnicking in the woods.

6. While we were quietly eating our breakfast on the porch, a loud shout was heard.

7. The advocate of public ownership urges that current costs too much, and they attribute this to the rapacity of the private companies.

8. When the engineers examined the scene of the accident, it was observed that the switch had broken.

9. If anybody asks you where I have gone, tell them it is none of their business.

10. If you have ever been in Japan, you will find the people most kindly, contented, and cleanly.

11. Let every young man and woman who has a voice come out for the choir, and sign their names on the bulletin board.

12. If you do not get seasick on an ocean liner does not prove that you would be immune in a dory.

13. It was so dark that no one could see their own noses.

LACK OF EMPHASIS

The emphatic sentence is a forceful sentence, and its force depends on several factors: its clarity, its choice of words, its appeal to the emotions and imagination, and its structure or build. On most of these matters something has already been said, but we have yet to speak of sentence structure as it affects emphasis. A sentence lacks strength when it is bloated or when it limps.

1. The Bloated Sentence

The bloated sentence offends by an excess of words. Its content may be unified and simple; it could be expressed adequately in a neat, simple way. But the author is not content to express himself directly and clearly. He pads his meaning out with superfluous, ineffective words, and often succeeds in obscuring the sharp features of his thought by a puffy rotundity of phrase. A student wrote:

There are few things that are more worth while and give one a more lasting satisfaction, contributing to one's health and at the same time to one's spiritual well-being,

than to spend a day in close proximity to the beauty that is so peculiarly Nature's own.

What is the trouble? The thought is simple and unified; the sentence is not overloaded with meaning. But it is bloated, swollen with superfluous words—pretentious and canting words, to boot. The student might have attained greater force and far greater clarity if he had written simply:

Few things contribute more to health of mind and body than a day spent in a beautiful country.

This sentence says quite as much as the bloated sentence, and says it better.

Obviously the remedy for a bloated style is to reduce; and luckily no long and severe methods are needed to reduce a sentence: discover the essential thought, and express it in direct and simple language. Then if you see any way to give that thought greater exactness, charm, or force by the substitution of vivid words or the addition of a phrase or a clause, change the sentence. But never fall into the error of supposing that by multiplying words one attains "literary style." Develop muscle, acquire symmetry and grace, fill language with rich, racing blood. But do not mistake *avoidupois* for power.

EXERCISES

Put into terse and simple language the following sentences:

1. Nevertheless, inasmuch as the urge is strong within me to pay my small tribute to this undying genius, I will add my weak words to those penned by hands far superior to mine,

in the realization that with such as he for an inspiration, the writing of these words cannot but make the hand that writes them stronger and better able to wield a pen.

2. The provocation to wasteful and extravagant expenditure is more decided in urban circles, and in the struggle to outdo one another they push their normal standard of conspicuous consumption to a higher point, with the result that a relatively greater expenditure in this direction is required to indicate a given degree of pecuniary decency in the city.

2. The Limping Sentence

The conclusion of a sentence should never be regarded as an unimportant appendage. Both in speaking and in writing it is the logical point for the effect of climax. The speaker who, after driving home the point of his remark, dwindles off into comparatively insignificant additions and qualifications, has violated one of the fundamental principles of art—emphasis of position. The sentence which weakens its conclusion with trifling matter or a feeble manner is unemphatic. It drags its foot behind it, when it should be in full stride; and we may call it a limping sentence.

There are two ways in which the close of a sentence may be weak; (a) it may contain unimportant material; (b) it may contain important material weakened by wrong subordination. The source of weakness may lie either in the comparative insignificance of the matter or in its grammatical subordination, sometimes in both.

Every sentence contains words, phrases, clauses that are important and others that are unimportant. If one places the most important words in the middle rather

than at the end, both the sentence and the idea to be conveyed are weakened. Here are some sentences that seem to limp at the close:

He is a fool in my opinion.

"As labor is the common burden of our race, so the effort of some to shift their share of the burden on to the shoulders of others is the great durable curse of the race," wrote Lincoln in 1854.

The United States leads the world in opportunities for higher education, in mechanical and scientific genius, in industrial originality, and in high-powered salesmanship.

All these sentences finish feebly, but the remedy is simple. Transpose the less important idea from the end to a place in the middle or beginning of the sentence. In some cases other adjustments are necessary, as in the following:

His style is marked by careless construction, inexact wording, needless repetition, and so forth.

"And so forth" is obviously a weak conclusion, but it cannot be placed elsewhere. Therefore, suppress it and write, "—and other signs of slipshod workmanship."

Weakness in the close of a sentence may be due to wrong subordination: the words may be important, but the construction reduces them to unimportance. One of the surest ways to destroy the force of a conclusion is to use the participial phrase. For example:

She worked hard for four years, finally becoming valedictorian of the class.

The detectives broke down the door, thus catching the counterfeiter in the act.

The obvious remedy for these sentences is to subordinate the main clause and turn the participial phrase into the main clause; thus:

After working hard for four years, she finally became valedictorian of her class.

The detectives, breaking down the door, caught the counterfeiter in the act.

Another very common form of wrong subordination is the indiscriminate use of nonrestrictive relative clauses to carry on the sentence.* There is nothing wrong or weak in using restrictive relative clauses in this position, for they are integral parts of the main thought, as for instance in this: "He slept in the bed in which his grandfather used to lie." But the nonrestrictive clause by definition contains an added thought. When this is a coördinate or principal thought, it is a grave error to weaken it by subordination. Look at this:

I seek the truth, which is all you can ask of me.

How much stronger it is to say:

I seek the truth, and that is all you can ask of me.

Again consider this:

You have shown ability to adapt yourself to the demands of the organization, which we have decided to encourage by raising your salary.

Here clarity and proper emphasis require that for the relative *which* we should substitute "and this quality." Note the marked increase in force.

* Definitions of restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses will be found on pp. 597-98.

A sentence may be weakened still further by what are known as overlapping relative clauses. For example:

Lebeau went to the best hotel, where he ordered a good dinner, which left him "broke."

The descending levels of subordination tend to give the effect of anticlimax.

Of course, when both the sources of weakness, unimportant matter and subordinate construction, are combined in the close of a sentence, we have a desperate case. Here is an illustration:

The pugilists put on the gloves and went at it, while the crowd sat around them in the club gymnasium, which was always so stuffy, you remember.

This should be revised to read: "In the stuffy atmosphere of the club gymnasium, while the crowd sat around, the pugilists put on the gloves and went at it."

In writing your sentences plan to mass your most effective words at the close, and do not weaken them by unnecessary subordination.

EXERCISE 1

Revise these sentences to secure an emphatic close:

The agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented under the operation of that policy. It will not cease until a crisis has been reached, in my opinion. This government cannot permanently endure half slave and half free, I believe.

EXERCISE 2

Rewrite the following sentences:

1. The world would not have progressed under those circumstances.

2. These girls develop an interest in various studies, which is greatly stimulated by the Girl Scouts organization.

3. Washington led many successful campaigns through New Jersey, one being on a Christmas night, when he captured a thousand Hessian soldiers at the capital city of Trenton.

4. The freshman has lost his cap, thus risking the chance of a hazing by the sophomores.

5. He went to the 10:30 class, where he was bored.

6. That girl has in her the makings of a first-rate cartoonist, it seems to me.

7. The team will win if it can keep its confidence and if the conditions are right, such as the state of the ground, etc.

8. I should like to borrow that book for a few days, if you don't think it presumptuous of me to ask.

9. There was one thing above all, religious unity, to which Dr. Sampson devoted the best years of his life and most of his private fortune.

10. The majority of people fail to take with a grain of salt what they read.

11. This interest should be enough to make anyone's married life happy, provided that the marriage is built on love and not on money.

12. Without thinking further of our luck, we hailed a passing cab, whose driver took my father to the station.

13. I bought a pound of Maillard's best chocolates for two dollars at the drugstore.

GENERAL EXERCISES

Exercise 1. Name the specific type of defect exemplified in the following sentences; or if there are more than one type of defect, name them. Rewrite each sentence correctly.

1. Some people favor public ownership of water-power, some private, while a large group favor public ownership but the distribution to be done by private companies.

2. Miss Pettigrew declared in a shrill, piping voice that never will she come to another meeting of the auxiliary.

3. I believe that the private corporation would be able to operate the plant with far greater success than if run by the government.

4. Jones had grown fat, caused by lack of exercise.

5. I am taking this course to improve my writing and since it is required.

6. The director showed me how to walk, slowly, wearily, and a trifle unsteady.

7. Patriotism is not sufficiently displayed by attendance on the jury when called to do so.

8. Ransom was guilty, and was a member of the Klan, and got off with a \$10 fine.

9. Being cold, the door was closed.

10. The hardships of the depression drive married couples to suicide or lead to strained relationships, causing separation or desertion.

11. But today with the efficiency of the government Post Office all the defects of private mail service are remedied.

12. Now as everyone knows, that in order for any undertaking to prove a success, a mutual agreement and understanding must be fostered and a settlement must be found and worked out.

13. Ever since the question of water power has been mentioned in connection with any government project I have been an interested spectator and student of all legislation connected with this subject, but when the question has come to include the administration of the water power question in my adopted state, I have become doubly interested, and I

modestly confess that I am highly honored to be able to appear before this gathering to give my humble opinion concerning this important question of public or private ownership and management of water-power plants in this state.

14. Putting the ball in play again on its own 30-yard line, two plays were enough to produce another score.

15. Who shall it be, the private monopolists, or shall we entrust these rich resources to our government?

16. The Harvard and Columbia Club squash tennis teams finished their regular season last night in a tie for Class B honors in the metropolitan league, each having won nine matches and lost three during the competition, which began back in October.

17. There is nothing he likes better than to sing with his wife, incidentally ruining her performance, at some social gathering.

18. Arriving at Easton, a few miles distant from Philadelphia, and a town where I had many friends, I first visited a barber.

19. You must adopt the most convenient method for concealing your duplicate key. Either in some accessible pocket or in shoe, drapery of cabinet, etc., etc.

20. In the last analysis, I can but compare the attitude of "our unusually courageous American" towards these already very familiar sights to that of a man with whom I came in contact, in 1915 or 1916, when as a small boy with my father, the late William Edmund McFarlane, I visited the many thousand acre cotton plantation of the late Rupert D. Wing (a close relative of the noted statesman, Hamilton Wing), on the Savannah River, in Western South Carolina.

21. The field is entirely new to me, for which reason I took the course.

22. They are good and of use.

23. I said that because of the prosperity which accompanies every Republican administration I shall vote for Hoover.

24. By hanging the fur coats in the cellar away from the sun's rays, they kept beautifully.

25. What with the minds of Milton, Wordsworth, Eliot, and others into which we delved, we learned to realize the riches in store for us.

26. Flying bugs eat holes in silks and starched materials in intervals between wearing them.

27. If one or two cases have proved failures it does not mean that all will.

28. Although our mail planes are equipped with the famous Wright "Whirlwind" motors, which reminds us of Col. Lindbergh, as all of his famous flights were made with this type of motor.

29. He insisted that I continue; so I did, but I was very careful not to drop another dish.

30. If their fathers had been Democrats or Republicans, they probably took it for granted, and became the same.

31. When gazing in absorbed admiration at certain paintings in the Prado Museum, an admirer seized and carried off all Mr. Robinson's own sketches.

32. If the government owned and operated hydro-electric power stations, it would not be communism.

33. Either you will find me in the foyer or in my seat.

34. He was assaulted, during his painful return, by the rudest fierceness of wintry elemental strife; through which, with bad accommodations and innumerable accidents, he became a prey to the merciless pangs of the acutest rheumatism, which barely suffered him to reach his home before it confined him, a tortured prisoner, to his bed.

35. This theme, due April 26th, is turned in overdue because I could not finish it before today because I had read so much on the subject treated herein that I was in a quandary as to what aspect of the subject I should tackle; consequently I did not realize the point until a theme had been half written, which, of course, necessitated my rewriting it, in the midst of which most arduous labor I discovered that I had made a most serious fault in organization, which necessitated my writing it over once more.

36. The first "break" I got came from a chap who thought he owed me something, and he went to the editor and said, "Why don't you try a piece from this guy Bailey?" and the editor said, "Who is he?" and my friend said, "Never mind; give him a chance," which he did.

37. The professor will take the roll; so I shall have to attend the lecture.

38. That is an instance of the real reason being love of being in the limelight, with patriotism used as the excuse.

39. I shall treat his views on some of the biggest problems he is facing and working out a solution.

40. My essay will be chiefly concerned with tracing the influence of this most significant work of More's on the more prominent movements for radical social reform of the present day, and also with deriving the bulk of their various ideas on social progress from the same book.

41. Can you explain the type of man he was, how his behavior was characteristic of the type, and other facts concerning him?

42. Schaaf was held to a pair of field goals by Dave Smith and three fouls.

43. The wages of workers in Soviet Russia are not so good as those of the average employed American worker, as I admitted before.

44. Both very able men, the outcome of such a debate promised to be interesting.

45. Pennsylvania, by losing tonight, still tops the circuit, but must win one of its remaining games with Dartmouth at Hanover, Saturday, or Princeton here, March 9, in order to gain its second straight championship, unless Dartmouth loses at Ithaca, which would automatically give the title to Penn.

46. America, with the frankness and sincerity of her architectural designers, has created something original.

47. Good health, a junior or senior or recent graduate of college, knowledge of social science, and a seriousness of purpose, were the qualifications demanded of the group.

48. An iron railing encloses the mound, having a small gate, for the key of which a notice-board advised me to ring the prison bell.

49. On the hill above Killeany the curious tiny oratory of St. Benan, a disciple of St. Patrick.

50. As a boy, two authors made an especially strong appeal to the King—Verne and Marryat.

51. Emerson declared Swedenborg one of the "mastodons of literature," not to be measured by whole colleges of ordinary scholars, but whom only a few may read.

52. Either the holding companies are superfluous or fraudulent.

53. The trouble was I was just out of college and thought I should revolutionize the American screen; so I was fired from that department.

54. I shall endeavor to explain two phases. First, how college students reflect on certain subjects, and secondly, the benefits derived from them.

55. Education along social lines, that is, the teaching of modern customs and ways of correct behavior in the social world, is an indispensable acquisition.

56. Athletics helps build a healthy body, which is an essential factor if one is to live successfully, while it helps one enjoy his leisure.

57. Harriman is likely to be found wanting when in conversation on everyday topics with other people.

58. Sitting in on the Oak Hill party along with Francis Ouimet, and enjoying it as I always do these caddie parties because of the wholehearted way in which the boys enter into the spirit of the occasion, my first thought was that the Fitchburg caddies must be a rough, hard lot.

59. Her mind could have been scarcely formed at such an early age, and therefore she was easily impressed by anything unusual or striking that happened to her.

60. Conrad recorded the words, deeds, and outward appearance of his shipmates and acquaintances in his earliest books.

61. Every man or woman who went "over there" to do their bit for their country were heroes or heroines.

62. Because you are devoted to the theatre does not mean that you are a good critic.

63. Men training for football should eat three meals each day at regular hours, distributed somewhat as follows: a fairly heavy breakfast, a light lunch at noon, and with a heavy meal coming at night.

64. With all these disheartening facts it nevertheless remains that there is a certain beauty in the skyscraper.

65. When in a certain review the pictures of Turner were condemned, it so affected Ruskin that he addressed a letter to the editor, reprobating the style and matter of the criticism.

66. Booth was strong and agile, which resulted in his being a tireless pedestrian.

67. Thoreau loved the beauty of America—its flowers, its trees, its rivers, its hills, its birds, its fish.

68. Contrary to the lives of most geniuses, his family was willing to encourage him.

69. If you are going to skate for the first time, a pair of first-class skates attached to the shoes should be purchased.

70. He usually had drawings and specimens, and with these he extemporized a rich flow of ideas.

Exercise 2. Point out all the flaws in these sentences, and rewrite them :

1. Perhaps some of us will become judges, some legislators, some executives ; but whatever we do let us remember that to-night we are only laying the cornerstone of the scholarship fund, and that only contributions from us will make it grow ; therefore, when you do meet success, let us return and water this little fund of ours with part of our fortune so that we may help some future student up the ladder of success.

2. While a conspicuous stone and concrete barn is to be erected on the site of the present old log structure, and a tank holding 8,000 gallons has been built, the popularity of the night excursions to behold the moonlight on the snow or the glories of sunrise will quickly lead to the long-contemplated construction of a new mountain house, so much needed to accommodate the ever-increasing volume of visitors in both summer and winter to this mountain Mecca of the Berkshire Hills.

3. Aside from the fact that Salem and Lynn High Schools are meeting tomorrow in a resounding clash at Bertram Field, Salem, in a collision that may be the first lap in the State championship, about which some data were given in this column several days ago, several thousands of persons will watch and be interested in the results of the Watertown High-Wakefield High game to-morrow at Victory Field.

4. When some enterprising citizen of Toronto offers a prize of \$500,000 to the mother who can produce the most children within a limited number of years, and the motherhood mass production records over in Italy, where Mussolini has proclaimed a certain woman "Italy's greatest

mother," due to her nonstop performance of twelve young ones in fourteen years, something should be done.

5. Have we ever thought about the news, gathered by innumerable reporters from all corners of the earth at the risk of life and health, sent by radio, telephone, and telegraph, received by the newspapers, which in turn give the news to their typesetters, who use machines that put the news into metal type at a rate of speed almost unbelievable, the machines which in turn produce the plates from this type for the presses which print the news, and in a great many cases we read the happenings but a few hours after their occurrence in some remote part of the world?

SENTENCE VARIETY

Writing sentences is not merely a matter of avoiding errors; it is a matter of writing in a style that will not pall through monotony and will even possess a measure of vitality and charm. A writer who commands only a limited number of sentence patterns, and simple ones at that, is like a dancing partner who has only one step, a preacher who has only one argument, a chef who has only one menu. When you find yourself dropping into the habit of writing sentences monotonously short and simple, or long and simple, or long and complex, realize that here is an opportunity to improve, to break the spell of monotony, to gain new effects. Of course, a sensible writer is not consciously concerned to use now one pattern, now another, now a third, for no reason at all but the urge or the command to vary his sentence-types. There should likewise be the realization that different ideas or impressions, different aspects of the same idea or impression, demand different forms of expression.

Sentences are roughly classified as simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. A simple sentence contains but one predication, one independent clause; there may be several subjects, but they all are subjects of the same verb or verbs; there may be several verbs, but they have the same subject or subjects. Even within the category of the simple sentence there is variety. Here are some examples.

You lie!

Beauty is skin-deep.

Berger and Binyon have bought No. 181 Summer Street to hold for a rise in real estate values.

Did you ever take part in a fraternity initiation and feel a bit theatrical?

Bruce, Tinker, Westermann, Cushman should all report to the gymnasium at four-thirty.

A sentence is called compound when it consists of two or more unsubordinated predications, and contains no subordinate clauses.

Jake is an excellent pitcher, but he is a failure at the bat.
Your remark hurts; moreover, it is false.

The Nazis regard international friendship as vicious; they scorn democracy; they hold thought, and especially free thought, to be both decadent and dangerous.

When the sentence consists of one independent clause plus one or more subordinate clauses, then we have a complex sentence. For instance:

Kipling said that the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

If he said so, he meant it.

A compound-complex sentence is one which contains two or more independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause.

As soon as the weather clears, I am going to get out my skis and take the train for Boulder, and I won't be back for a week.

Whoever drives a car under the influence of alcohol is jeopardizing the lives of the occupants not only of his own car but of every car he passes on the road; and if he is killed in an accident, he gets no more than he deserves.

The reason for thus analyzing and classifying sentences is that we may have a better grasp of sentence structure and may avoid monotony. A long series of simple sentences or of simple and compound sentences, unrelieved by subordination, produces a naïve, a gawky effect. If in revising the first draft of a composition, you discover that subordinate clauses are rare, provide a little relief by introducing subordination where it is appropriate. A sprinkling of complex sentences not only makes for variety, but also suggests that the writer's mind has advanced beyond the six-year-old level of unsubordinated assertions and questions.

EXERCISES

Introduce variety and subordination into this series of monotonous sentences. Not all sentences need to be changed. Make sure you create no lopsided or limping sentences.

1. The city administration is not consistent. It will not tolerate the sale of books on sex hygiene. It has banned the sale of Augustine's *Confessions*. It permits the sale of *Ballyhoo*. It allows the burlesque theatres to do a big busi-

ness. I should like to know the answer to a question. Is somebody paying somebody something? Or is there a peculiar type of mind? Do some people abhor the serious consideration of the problems of passion? Do they think it is all just funny? I do not know the answer, but perhaps somebody does.

2. Yesterday I went skating. I had not been on skates for five years. There was a river near my old home. Sometimes it was frozen over for two or three weeks. One could skate for twenty miles at a stretch. I became quite expert. I could skate backwards with ease. I could cut various figures. Yesterday I felt awkward and easily lost my balance. Once I fell. But I shall get better. My muscles will learn to adjust themselves automatically. I shall regain confidence.

A good writer will inevitably vary his sentence-pattern, not because he is trying to obey a rule, but because he feels the impulse to express himself in various ways and because the accurate transference of the thought demands it. Stevenson may furnish a case in point:

The peculiar outdoor sport of this district [Davos, Switzerland] is tobogganing. A Scotsman may remember the low flat board, with the front wheels on a pivot, which was called a "hurlie"; he may remember this contrivance laden with boys, as laboriously started, it ran rattling down the brae, and was, now successfully, now unsuccessfully, steered round the corner at the foot; he may remember scented summer evenings passed in this diversion, and many a grazed skin, bloody cockscorn, and neglected lesson. The toboggan is to the hurlie what the sled is to the carriage; it is a hurlie upon runners; and if for a grating road, you substitute a long declivity of beaten snow you can imagine the giddy career of the tobogganist. The correct position is to sit; but the fantastic will sometimes sit, hindforemost, or dare the descent upon their belly or their back. A few steer with a

pair of pointed sticks, but it is more classical to use the feet. If the weight be heavy and the track smooth, the toboggan takes the bit between its teeth; and to steer a couple of full-sized friends in safety requires not only judgment but desperate exertion. On a very steep track with a keen evening frost, you may have moments almost too appalling to be called enjoyment; the head goes, the world vanishes; your blind steed bounds below your weight; you reach the foot with all the breath knocked out of your body, jarred and bewildered as though you had just been subjected to a railway accident.

And here is an illustration from William McFee:

Ships built in Scotland in ultra-modern yards with every electric appliance used to go to sea with only a hammer and chisel and a few wrenches for tools. To cut a hole for a bolt in a steel bulkhead half an inch thick, this writer has been handed nothing save a hammer and a piece of steel, which he had to grind on an old bumpy grindstone and temper himself in a bucket in the fireroom. The excuse used to be that a good man could go round the world in an engine room with a corkscrew, a hammer, and a piece of string, and do all the repairs therewith. Scotch frugality and manual skill combined to fashion a convention of everlasting toil. The change to oil destroyed this to a great extent. Electric power being available in every modern vessel, there was no longer the excuse for working oneself to death to save a shilling. But we have the paradox that in the old-time ships, where we had to work field-days every day of our lives to keep her going, and often had breakdowns as well, there were very few mechanical aids, whereas in a modern electric-drive oil-burning liner, which needs about as much attention as a good typewriter or adding machine, the tween-deck storerooms bristle with electric tools.

EXERCISE

Write five or six sentences on some sport or on some contrast between the old and the new; and vary the length and type of the sentences.

EFFECTIVE SENTENCES

It is one thing to write sentences that are correct; it is another to write sentences that are pleasantly varied in length and structure; it is still something else to write sentences that possess distinction and power. You do not want to have it said of your style, any more than you want it said of your character, "Oh, it's harmless." You want your style to possess certain positive qualities of clarity, charm, and force. If you expect, however, to find in the following pages certain models of sentence structure which you may take over and use indiscriminately in your compositions in order to acquire those elusive qualities, you will be disappointed. The clarity of a sentence depends not on the use of any particular form of sentence structure, but on the adaptation of the structure to the thought. There is no more possibility of securing clarity by the haphazard use of a few sentence frames than there is of solving all the problems in solid geometry by a few formulæ. Charm, also, is too subtle a matter for rule; it lies in the choice of words and the rhythm of sentence movement. If a student can avoid harsh and tongue-twisting sounds and choose his words with some consideration for their effect on the ear, he has secured as much charm as can be expected of an amateur. Force, even, is largely a matter of vocabu-

lary and of obedience to the elementary principle that important elements should not be subordinate in syntax and should occupy conspicuous positions in the sentence. Nevertheless, there are three types of sentence structure which a student may practise his hand upon, and which, if discreetly and skilfully used, will add a distinct character to his style.

These types may be called: (1) the long periodic sentence; (2) the short, wiry sentence; and (3) the symmetrical sentence. Each secures its effect not merely by avoiding a certain defect but by developing to a high degree the opposite excellence. The long periodic sentence is not content merely to be different from the limping sentence, which, as we say, comes to a lame conclusion; on the contrary, it concentrates all its pent-up strength on the conclusion. The short, wiry sentence is not content merely to be less puffy than the bloated sentence; it is trained down so that no superfluous weight of words will slacken its force. The symmetrical sentence is not content merely to be free from a grotesque distortion; it deliberately cultivates a pleasing balance, harmony, symmetry of elements.

1. The Long Periodic Sentence

The long periodic sentence, like all good sentences, concludes with words that are deserving of emphasis. But more than that, it is something like a kicking full-back in football; it is so constructed that all its bulk, all the swing of its body, so to speak, is concentrated on those concluding words. This effect is produced by keeping the sense incomplete until the last phrase is

written down. The suspense created by this device is only satisfied by that last phrase; and the phrase receives all the pent-up power of the whole sentence. In plain words, a periodic sentence is one in which grammatical completeness is reserved till the end so that the power of the closing words is greatly increased by the effect of suspense. In figurative language, it is a sentence that throws all the accumulated swing of the body into the toe. Examine the following examples closely, and note that not one could be cut short without destroying the sense and grammatical structure.

If the inculcation of a long and glorious tradition, if familiarity with great spirit embodied in great form, be not an element of surpassing value in any education that is worthy of the name, then let us frankly recognize that in our concern with producing the efficiency of a machine, we are no longer interested in the making of men. (J. L. Lowes, *Convention and Revolt in Poetry*.)

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Philippians, IV, 8.)

Until the community is organized in such a way that the fear of bodily want is forgotten as completely as the fear of wolves already is in civilized capitals, we shall never have a decent social life. (G. B. Shaw.)

So far as that limited revelation of the nature of things, which we call scientific knowledge, has yet gone, it tends, with constantly increasing emphasis, to the belief that, not merely the world of plants, but that of animals; not merely living things, but the whole fabric of the earth; not merely our planet, but the whole solar system; not merely our star and its satellites, but the millions of similar bodies which bear witness to the order which pervades boundless space,

and has endured through boundless time; are all working out their predestined course of evolution. (Thomas Huxley.)

And since flight is not a natural function of man; since it has been won by centuries of effort; since it has been climbed to arduously, not simply stumbled upon; since it has been slowly built, not suddenly discovered, it cannot be suspended as the word "freedom" is suspended in the mind. (Anne Morrow Lindbergh.)

2. The Short, Wiry Sentence

The short, wiry sentence is not weighted down with an ounce of superfluous verbiage; it delivers its meaning with a snap. It must have more than ordinary pungency, perhaps a touch of originality in thought or phrasing; or else it is a mere short sentence. Of this type here are some examples:

Without conviction, there will be no action.

The distinguishing part of our constitution is its liberty.

Machinery is aggressive. The weaver becomes a web, the machinist a machine. If you do not use the tools, they use you. (Emerson.)

Spiritualism is, after all, little better than Materialism turned upside down.

Bates College is about to establish another debating precedent.

All decent young people want a cause of some kind to fight for. (W. R. Benét.)

It will be observed that those sentences in this list which are most striking are those which in addition to brevity possess a novelty of thought or a picturesqueness of phrase. There is nothing creditable or praiseworthy in a mere short sentence stating a bald or commonplace fact. Do not pat yourself on the back if you

write a succession of sentences like this: "Rome is a city in Italy." But write: "Rome is the seat of two absolutisms"; and the brevity brings out more sharply an interesting idea. As a means of emphasis, therefore, the short sentence may well stand at the beginning or end of a paragraph to call attention to an important idea. Or it may stand anywhere to indicate transition.

The short, pithy sentence is most effective, naturally, when it stands in contrast to a long one. Each sets off the other. Observe these sentences from Stevenson:

Yet, in the bottom of my heart, I knew that magazine would be a grim fiasco; I knew it would not be worth reading; I knew, even if it were, that nobody would read it; and I kept wondering how I should be able, upon my compact income of £12 per annum, payable monthly, to meet my share in the expense. It was a comfortable thought to me that I had a father.

How much the second brief sentence gains from following after the long and ponderous one! And besides, it has a touch of humor. The prosaic and trite sentence is neither better nor worse for brevity. It is the vivid, novel, pungent, or humorous thought which gains through brevity something of the force of epigram.

3. The Symmetrical Sentence

Like a tight-rope walker the symmetrical sentence practises the principle of balance and makes of it a fine art. Not merely is there a general symmetry of structure, but word corresponds to word, phrase to phrase, till the observer is charmed with the neatness of the effect. The balanced sentence, consisting of two corre-

sponding elements, naturally is most serviceable when one wishes to set off two thoughts by contrast or by comparison. The clarity and force of the effect are markedly increased by the precision with which part balances off against part. Watch the arrangement of these sentences carefully:

We become mad in pursuit of sex: we become equally mad in the persecution of that pursuit. Unless we gratify our desire, the race is lost: unless we restrain it, we destroy ourselves. (G. B. Shaw.)

Put not your trust in money, but put your money in trust. (Oliver Wendell Holmes.)

Those who have failed to experience the joys that make life worth living are, probably, in as small a minority as those who have never known the griefs that rob existence of its savor and turn its richest fruits into mere dust and ashes. (Thomas Huxley.)

The difference between the soaring angel and the creeping snake was but a type of the difference between Bacon the Philosopher and Bacon the Attorney-General, Bacon seeking for truth and Bacon seeking for the seals. (Macaulay.)

The principle of balance can be extended and modified in many ways. It may apply merely to a part of a sentence leaving an essential and important part outside the scheme of corresponding elements; it may be extended to more than two parts, and in that case is called parallelism. The following shows both these modifications:

These mountains are infinitely lonesome, the more because Roman camps have pitted their sides and Roman bridges still left feet far from Rome across their streams, because skeletons of castles of the old kings of Wales and

Norman overlords clutter their foothills, because cottages smoke at their chimneys and glow at their windows when the shadows of these mountains creep across the twilight world. (R. P. T. Coffin, *A Book of Crowns and Cottages*. Yale University Press.)

One can carry the principle into a long and elaborate series, but then there is danger of becoming too artificial and monotonous. When the series of parallel phrases or clauses tends to become mechanical, introduce variety. The following sentence will bear close analysis as a subtle piece of artistry:

And the baffled dreams and the broken visions and the ruined hopes and the secret desires of each one labored with him as he labored; the things that were lost and beaten and trampled down went into the stone and steel and gave it soul; the aspiration denied and the hope abandoned and the vision defeated were the things that lived, and not the apparent purpose for which each one of all the millions sweat and toiled or cheated; the hidden things, the silent things, the winged things, so weak they are easily killed, the unacknowledged things, the rejected beauty, the strangled appreciation, the inchoate art, the submerged spirit—these groped and found each other and gathered themselves together and worked themselves into the tiles and mortar of the edifice and made a town that is a worthy fellow of the sunrise and the sea winds. (Don Marquis, *Almost Perfect State*. Doubleday, Doran & Company.)

Do such carefully modeled sentences as these seem labored? Does the attempt to write similar ones seem artificial, cramping? Watch a boy trying to learn the "crawl" in swimming, or a girl drawing a bow over the violin strings for the first time; are their movements easy and natural? First attempts are always

clumsy and artificial. But the time comes when these efforts are no longer strained; they have become a second nature. The movements are easy, graceful, strong. And so with writing, we add to our powers only through the method of crude and forced experiment. Without innovation there is no progress.

Let no one think, however, that all good sentences must conform to the three types we have considered. The varieties of structure, even of good structure, are well-nigh infinite. Glance over the pages of a dozen stylists, and you cannot discover any formula but this: avoid monotony. A continuous procession of simple, matter-of-fact, unsubordinated clauses sounds childish and reveals a naïve mind. Variety is desirable for its own sake, but differentiation in sentence structure is desirable also to express differences in thought. When thoughts or images are infinitely varied, to embody them all in the same unrelieved, crude pattern reveals lack of intelligence. What coach would select for his ball team nine men of the same build, the same qualities of eye and arm?

Every sentence has its rôle to play, and should be built to play it. That is the first and last principle in sentence structure.

EXERCISES

1. Select from the expository and argumentative articles in a book of readings, six sentences representing each of the three types just discussed. Write them down and be prepared to point out in detail the reasons for their effectiveness.

2. Take three ideas which you hold strongly. Express each of them in a well-constructed, long periodic sentence, followed by a short, wiry sentence.

3. Select two contrasted persons, two contrasted methods of playing or working, and two inconsistent ideas or practices which you have noted. Work each contrast out in a neatly balanced sentence.

4. Develop a sentence of a hundred words or more in which you employ the principle of parallelism.

CHAPTER VI

PARAGRAPHS

EVERY sentence has its rôle to play." This statement implies that there is a drama, a plot, a game, which determines the actions of the players. What a sentence does or tries to do cannot be separated altogether from what the other members of the cast or team are doing. Even a great tragedian or a star punter can do little if he acts alone. Likewise sentences must act together for clearly conceived purposes. For most of them are members of organizations called paragraphs, and cannot be fully understood apart from their context. Let us devote our attention, then, to the nature and organization of paragraphs.

THE NATURE OF PARAGRAPHS

What is a paragraph? In black and white, it is a unit of writing the beginning of which is indicated by the commencement of a new line and the indentation of the first word, or by some other device. Anyone who has read a book without paragraphs—a medieval manuscript, for instance, which runs on for several pages without a break—will not require any explanation of the psychological necessity for regular breathing spaces. Furthermore, there is the practi-

cal need of seeing the logical structure of the material one is trying to absorb; one wants to realize the divisions of the subject. And paragraphs serve to mark the minor divisions. What the deliberate pause is to the trained public speaker, the paragraph indentation is to the writer. It is the signal that the thought is taking a new step forward or a new trend in another direction.

The length of a paragraph depends upon three things: its purpose, its author, and its readers. A paragraph of only one or two sentences may be justified on the ground of its purpose. The speeches of different characters in narrative writing, no matter how brief they are, are generally assigned separate paragraphs in order that the eye may take in easily the shift from one character to another.

"The New York Rowdy Journal, sir," resumed the colonel, "is, as I expect you know, the organ of our aristocracy in this city."

"Oh! there *is* an aristocracy here, then?" said Martin. "Of what is it composed?"

"Of intelligence, sir," replied the colonel; "of intelligence and virtue. And of their necessary consequence in this republic. Dollars, sir." (Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit*.)

A short paragraph may announce the plan which later paragraphs are to develop part by part:

It next behooves us to consider in detail what strength the 6th Army could already summon, and then we shall be in a position to appreciate the extent of its task, the nature of the risk it ran, its peril two days later, its ultimate success, and the difficulties in the way of that success. (Belloc, *Elements of the Great War*. Cosmopolitan Book Corporation.)

A short paragraph may be used in a long exposition or argument to emphasize transitions from one division to another :

But, great as is the magnitude of these physical changes of the world, they have been accompanied by a no less striking series of modifications in its living inhabitants. (Thomas Huxley.)

Finally, the short paragraph may set off sharply an idea that deserves special stress, such as the summary of a train of thought, a warning against misconception, or a rhetorical climax :

Is not this a mystery of life? (Ruskin.)

You are now in the position of the congregation of St. Paul. We are all in it to-day. A question that has been practically closed for a whole epoch, the question of the distribution of wealth and the nature of property, has suddenly yawned wide open before us ; and we all have to open our closed minds accordingly. (G. B. Shaw, *An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism*. Brentano's.)

In all these instances the paragraph of one, two, or three sentences has its justification in the desirability of keeping the dialog clear, or of bringing out boldly the structure of the composition, or of throwing some point into high relief. Avoid writing paragraphs of such brevity unless you can show that they serve one of these purposes.

Apart from these exceptions, a paragraph usually involves the expansion or development of an idea in at least four or five sentences. Whether it shall be longer depends partly on the mind of the writer. If he is naturally succinct and covers his point effectively

in a hundred words there is no reason for expanding to two hundred. Nor if he is expansive, unlimited as to space, and able to elaborate his point interestingly for two hundred and fifty or three hundred words, should he condense to one hundred and fifty. But he should consider to some extent the mind of the reader. Those who supply printed matter for infantile or invalided minds chop up their paragraphs to make digestion easy. Certain newspapers print each sentence separately like the sentences in a primer. Ironically enough, these papers profess to cater to "people who think"! Such kindergarten devices are, of course, an insult to the intelligence of mature readers; and when applied to long pieces of writing actually make the process of intelligent absorption harder, since there is nothing to indicate the logical division of the material. But one may legitimately make to popular audiences as much concession as this: when one has a tendency to write long paragraphs, note whenever there are true divisions within such paragraphs and convert these divisions into separate units.

Regarding the length of a paragraph, then, we may lay down these rough rules: (1) A paragraph under one hundred words needs special justification. (2) A paragraph longer than three hundred words should be cut down or split in two at a logical division point. Paragraphs longer or shorter need not be wrong; there is simply the danger that they prove wearisome or incomplete.

The essential qualities of a well-organized paragraph in exposition or argument, as of a clear and effective sentence, have long been known as unity, coherence,

and emphasis. All these qualities are incompatible with the notion upon which many students act, even when they know it to be wrong; namely, that a paragraph is simply a series of sentences that come haphazard into a writer's mind when a stimulus is applied, a mere accidental succession of ideas, covering half a page or a page of theme-paper. The proper name for such a casual clutter of ideas is not a paragraph but a pipe-dream. A pipe-dream may possess charm and interest; if so, it may make a delightful informal essay. But no one expects it to possess unity, coherence, and emphasis—the essentials of clear, purposeful thought and effective presentation.

There is another notion which a thoughtless student is likely to entertain; that unity, coherence, and emphasis are academic principles evolved in a professor's study and never to be discovered outside the pages of a textbook. As a matter of fact they govern the *Saturday Evening Post* article, the *Springfield Republican* editorial, the clothing advertisement, the latest popular biography, as well as the writing of such foes of the academic mind as Upton Sinclair and H. L. Mencken. They have never been better illustrated than in the best work of an Illinois rail-splitter who never went to college at all. Though they have the authority of all the colleges of the world behind them, they have a much higher sanction. They are dictated by Common Sense.

UNITY

Let us examine the first of these principles. Unity in a paragraph means that every sentence should serve

the one purpose of the paragraph, should bear closely on the one idea to be developed. In terms of teamwork, unity means that the sentences are all responding to the same signal, engaged in the same play. The signal is the topic sentence, the play is the development of the topic sentence. Accordingly, the test of unity in a paragraph is the question whether the sentences all bear out or follow directly from the topic sentence.

Here follows a paragraph which lacks unity:

Benjamin Franklin was the first civilized American. This strong statement may well provoke the question: "Why do you call him so?" Because he was the first American who was also a citizen of the world. His most marked characteristic was a gusto for living. His avowed aim was to "do good," and live a satisfying life. Because, moreover, at a period noted for narrowness, superstition, and bleak beliefs, he was mirthful, generous, open-minded, learned, tolerant, and humor-loving.

The fourth and fifth sentences are obviously irrelevant, and do not bear out the topic sentence or its restatement in the third sentence. One does not have to think twice to realize that in so far as Franklin possessed a gusto for living, a purpose to do good, and a desire to lead a satisfying life, he was like hundreds of other Americans before him. The two sentences do not bear out the topic sentence; they are quite irrelevant. They actually nullify it by offering in corroboration facts that do not corroborate. Lack of unity, therefore, may not only distract your reader's mind; it may also lead him to suspect that if your mind is so easily distracted it may not be worth following.

There are two common reasons for lack of unity

in team-play: failure to hear or understand the signal, and the temptation to play an individual game. Now when an experienced player fails to catch the signal he calls for it again, because he knows that to go into action without understanding the play is to make a fool of himself and to defeat his own team. Yet many an otherwise intelligent young writer starts a paragraph with no definite conception of what he is driving at. The words come and the sentences come, but the total result is chaos.

The other cause for lack of unity is the temptation, after one has decided on a certain topic and a certain method of development, to drop it when some alluring side-issue crops up. What happens to a player who swerves aside from his job to vent a grudge or to indulge in theatricals for the benefit of the grandstand? He is likely to hear some plain talk from the coach. When you set out to explain a way of earning money in one's spare time, do not stop for anecdotes, however amusing they may be, that do not help us to understand the work itself, the way to obtain it, its drawbacks and compensations. A businesslike exposition may be highly diverting, as we may see in Quiller-Couch's definition of *Jargon*; but his humor never distracts him from the business in hand.

To secure unity in a paragraph, formulate, at least in your mind, a sentence which expresses the idea you wish that paragraph to convey, and then proceed to develop or justify that idea. To test the unity of a paragraph, examine every sentence to see that it fulfills that purpose. To improve the unity of a para-

graph, remove everything that does not fulfill that purpose.

EXERCISES

1. Point out whether or not the following paragraphs are unified, and what, if any, is the central or dominant thought :

a. And here, as events proved, we are near to the main source of the "propaganda by deed" excitement which, under the name of Anarchism, so widely infected the Socialist movement at that period. That this Anarchist propaganda was organized and stimulated by police spies and *agents provocateurs*, admits of no doubt. The subsequent tragic incidents of the Walsall Anarchist bomb plot, and the revelations that then and after ensued, especially in connection with the notorious Coulon, proved that for years the police had been at work devising Anarchist plots and inveigling dupes into their criminal net. (J. Bruce Glasier, *William Morris and the Early Days of the Socialist Movement*. Longmans, Green & Company.)

b. The life of John Keats was full of tragedy. Because of his poverty he was always sensitive on the score of his origin. He felt inclined to regard every man of birth as a natural enemy. His life was a constant struggle to satisfy his growing literary ambition. He was passionately fond of his mother and brother Tom, and suffered acutely at their death. His great passion for Fannie Brawne did much to hasten his death. She stimulated his poetic energy, but the alternations of doubt and rapture gradually sapped his strength. Every strain to which bereavement, poverty, congenital disease, love unsatisfied, and disappointed ambition could impose was his. The result was death far from home and friends and love, death through the torture of hemorrhage and gasping breath.

c. From this imaginary world all unpleasant things will be excluded. Because the acquisition and preparation of daily food are tiresome, these imaginary people will have dishes that supply food of themselves and never-failing

goblets of wine. Their chessboards will be of glittering bronze, and their chessmen of pure gold. Their music will be of such sweetness as will throw a man into a sleep or a swoon. Because ordinary warfare is perilous and dreadful, these imaginary folk will have magic armor that protects them from wounds, talismanic spears, and swords that never fail to bring victory. When people are very happy, they do not note the passage of time; consequently in this imaginary world many years pass as one day. All of these characteristics are actually found in a number of Irish fairy stories which were written down at least a thousand years ago. For example, the details given above are in the "Adventures of Loegaire," which is in a manuscript almost eight hundred years old.

d. The activities of the National Bureau of Standards in aviation are a natural outgrowth of the many tests and investigations conducted for the military departments during the War. Early in 1917, the first of the bureau's three wind tunnels was constructed for experimental research on the aerodynamics of model airplanes, dirigibles, and bombs. At about the same time, the first of the bureau's altitude laboratories was completed, making it possible to test airplane engines in the laboratory under flight conditions. Many of the investigations undertaken by the radio section during the War also had a bearing on aeronautics and out of them have grown some of the most important developments of the present day. The testing of the structural materials likewise included a great many researches on those materials specially adapted to the building of airplanes and lighter-than-air craft.

e. There is one general comment that can be made on quack advertising and that is: it adds to the gaiety of life. From the commercial point of view it is necessary; from my point of view it is useless. Its aim is to attract attention and hoodwink the public into buying something it does not want. The unsuspecting public is little aware of the subtle means employed by advertising to achieve this end. Adver-

tisements seem to appear everywhere. You cannot escape them. Your attention is inevitably focused on them in streetcars, trains, and subways. The newspapers devote the greater portion of their space to them. If only it were possible to segregate genuine advertising from the deceptive, false advertising, surely there would be less dissatisfaction, less grumbling.

2. Write a unified expository paragraph of at least 200 words on an idea suggested by one of the following subjects :

a. Reserved Books. b. Pullman Porters. c. Examinations. d. Boarding House Cookery. e. Militarism in the Schools. f. Skating. g. Hallowe'en. h. Mountain Climbing. i. The School Paper. j. Laboratory Work. k. Shucking Corn. l. Beauty Creams. m. Prayer Meetings. n. Jackknives. o. Student Relief.

COHERENCE

Though a paragraph may be perfectly unified, it may yet be hard to understand; just as a team may all be following the same signal and yet not play together. The half-back may start too soon, the end may run too far, or the tackle may not furnish the necessary interference. Playing effectively means not only a unified purpose, but also coherent teamwork. The members must play in such order and with such mutual support that their efforts to carry forward the ball may not be wasted. Coherence means teamwork.

Rhetorical coherence as applied to the paragraph means making clear the relation between the parts. When a paragraph is coherent, the reader never wonders what connection one sentence bears to what precedes or what follows. The relation between the parts is clear. The test for coherence is to ask concerning

each sentence whether or not it follows logically and lucidly from its predecessors.

The careless or inexperienced writer tends to make an entirely natural sequence of ideas clumsy and ineffectual by the omission of important steps, by failure to indicate logical relationships, by casting thoughts into such sentence patterns that, though clear enough if they stood alone, the ideas do not clearly link on to what has gone before. The reader may be able to muddle through, but only by dint of mind-reading. Therefore the writer, after he has determined on his topic sentence, and considered how he is going to develop or fortify it, should always keep in mind each sentence as he writes the next, and thus maintain right through the paragraph a clear thread of connection. He should never lose sight of the main topic, for then he loses unity; he should never lose sight of the immediate context, for then he loses coherence.

Coherence has two aspects: coherence of thought and coherence of form. Of the two the first is the more important; without it merely mechanical couplings are deceptive and in the end futile. No paragraph is really coherent unless there is a real interrelation of thought. What, to come down to brass tacks, does "interrelation of thought" mean? It means that it is possible to say of every sentence what logical relationship it bears to the preceding matter and to the whole paragraph. Consider the following:

1. Are you watching the color of your food, or don't you give it a thought? 2. Perhaps it is sheer ignorance in you that you sit down to a meal improperly contrasted, a meal of all sickly yellows, say, such as chicken soup, calf's liver,

squash, sauterne, cornbread and butter, fig pudding, and yellow chartreuse. 3. Not a green anywhere, nor red, nor even a dirty orange! 4. Well, probably you haven't studied the recent findings of the Kellogg scientists, makers of All-American All-Bran. 5. It seems that the latest way to a balanced diet is through color. 6. Bring the red stewed tomato next to the yellow potato chip; bring the mauve eggplant next to the green broccoli. 7. Then you will grow sturdy and carbohydrated, and the sparkle will come back in your eye. 8. It is quite revealing to learn that certain people whose stomach trouble we had supposed to be attributable to some chemical maladroitness are in fact deficient not calorifically but esthetically. (*The New Yorker*.)

Sentence 1 asks a question; 2 amplifies the second part of 1 as a possibility; 3 gives the negative side of 2; 4 offers an explanation of the possibility set forth in 2; 5 clarifies 4; 6 makes 5 concrete; 7 gives the result of 6; 8 is a reflection summing up the whole. In any thoroughly coherent paragraph it is possible to point out the relation between the sentences.

Coherence of thought makes two requirements of the writer: (1) he shall arrange his thoughts in a rational order; (2) he shall omit no important link in the chain. One cannot be more specific since there are many ways in which an irrational mind can break a chain of thought, and many ways in which a careless or too nimble mind may skip an important link.

EXERCISES

1. What sentence in the following paragraph is out of place? What other adjustments of wording should be made?

Every age has its problems, be they moral, religious, or educational. Take, for example, the "placing" of students

in Colonial days. The placing of a student's name on the class list depended, first, on the family pedigree, then, on the financial standing, and finally, on the father's business, profession, or office. The student's name was not printed in the catalog in alphabetical order, as is the practice to-day. In Colonial times "degradation," which was the severest form of punishment next to expulsion, consisted of lowering the student's name on the class list. Consider the feelings of the poor student and the perplexity of the president of the college.

2. Discover the relationship between the ideas in these sentences, discover what connecting ideas have been omitted, and insert sentences to bridge the gaps :

It is not uncommon to hear people say, "Any alien who finds fault with the United States ought to be deported to his native land." The alien arrives here and encounters many difficulties. Ought he to be pleased with everything without reserve? Foreigners consider the United States a free country!

3. Proceed as in Exercise 2.

When the price of an article is reduced, people often do not buy it because they think it must be of poor quality. The Blue Ribbon Corporation found that it could sell its best brown eggs at forty-five cents a dozen. The sales dropped off instead of increasing. A concern may find that its profit on an article is high enough to enable it to lower the price, and thus win the good will of its customers. Quite often a concern finds that there is more profit if it sells an article in quantity, making less profit on each individual article but a greater profit on the mass sale. The article, however, is not of poorer quality. There is a certain chain of radio stores which sells its tubes below cost. The motive is to get the customer into the store. Once in, he usually buys other articles.

It is not enough that the thought of a paragraph be coherent; the expression must be connected too, for

it is the expression which carries the thought to the reader's mind. The thought of a whole paragraph is like a train, and the various interrelated thoughts are like cars well coupled together. But the train cannot proceed until it moves over rails fitted together with extreme precision. Rails evenly placed and bolted securely together are essential to the passage of the train. These are mechanical matters, and it is not unnatural that the passage of thought from mind to mind should be greatly expedited by certain mechanical devices.

These devices for connecting sentences are the following: (1) using conjunctive words and phrases; (2) placing near the beginning of a sentence words that refer to what has preceded; (3) embodying similar ideas in similarly constructed sentences or clauses; (4) suggesting or stating near the beginning of the paragraph how the thought is to be developed or into what divisions it falls. There are few ways in which an inexperienced writer can so easily improve the clarity of his style as by noting and practising these devices. Let us examine each one of them with particular care.

1. The Use of Conjunctive Words and Phrases

The only conjunctions of a five-year-old are usually *and*, *but*, and *so*. In a few more years he has acquired *still*, *if*, *unless*, *because*, and most of the adverbial conjunctions of time and space, such as *while*, *where*, *as long as*. But it is not until he approaches maturity that he feels the necessity of conjunctions expressing logical relationships accurately. As he begins to reason, he has to find words that indicate cause, result, con-

cession, contrast, opposition, exemplification, inference, deduction; he acquires *inasmuch as, consequently, to be sure, on the other hand, on the contrary, for instance, the inference is, therefore*. The use of such conjunctive phrases and words is a rough index of one's ability to think. It is a fairly accurate index of one's ability to communicate thought.

A little girl will lisp: "Motherth come home, and the doggie ith tied up." What does this mean? What relation have these facts to each other? The loose conjunction *and* affords no help. Perhaps the second fact is the result of the first; perhaps they are merely synchronous, and the implication is that Mother will now release the dog. Perhaps there is surprise at the fact that though Mother has come home, the dog is still tied up. Perhaps Mother waited for the dog to be tied up before she ventured back. Any of these meanings is possible. Obviously the lack of a precise connective reveals the girl's immaturity of mind and makes her meaning a riddle. Now insert one of these connectives—*therefore, yet, now that, or because*. There is no longer doubt as to the meaning.

Look over the sentences of Carlyle, Ruskin, Lowes Dickinson, Santayana, or any other dealer in ideas, and you will find a goodly proportion beginning with a connective such as *now, finally, moreover, however, on the other hand, then, for, yet*. Not that every sentence should so begin; not that every paragraph should be studded with these connectives. The use of connectives either at the beginning or near the beginning should not become an obsession. One should simply ask as one passes from one sentence to another: "What

is the logical relationship? Is it so obvious that it does not need to be expressed? Or does it require expression for the sake of clarity or emphasis?"

2. Placing Words of Reference and Comparison

One cannot help using words of reference and comparison in developing a subject; rather would it require some vigilance to avoid referring to a preceding sentence through pronouns and such words as *thus, there, then, worse, more exactly, so well, less efficient, quite different*. These and similar expressions are used equally by the youngster just learning to handle a pen and by the professional journalist who taps off his thousands of words a day. It is therefore no distinction to use them; skill lies in placing them near the words to which they refer.

Note how the second of the following sentences seems to have jumped the track:

The corporal was passing out the uniforms over the counter. Life in the slums of Portland and along the waterfront of New Orleans had given his voice an ugly snarl.

Obviously the trouble lies in the fact that not until we reach the word *his* far down in the second sentence can we even guess what the slums of Portland have to do with the uniforms on the counter. The word is badly placed. The sentence should be revised to begin: "His voice had caught an ugly snarl from—" Again take this:

While he was ill his friends used to drop in often to see him. He came to depend on their society thus.

Needless to say, the second sentence should begin: "Thus he came to depend—"

It requires no perspicacity to see that the thought flows more smoothly from sentence to sentence if words of reference and comparison are placed near their antecedents. This consideration, however, should not be allowed to interfere with placing at the end of a sentence words that deserve emphasis; nor should it lead to such awkward and absurd inversions as: "Him the dean observed in the act of emptying a hip-flask"; or "This situation considering, I recommend that the deficit be made up by installing slot machines." Rhetorical rules are to be applied with due regard for the norms of English usage. Emphasis should not drag to the end of a sentence a word that is a misfit in that position; and coherence should not force it to the beginning. Nevertheless it remains true that, with due allowance for the conventions of word order in the English clause and phrase, the best position for words that deserve emphasis is the end of a sentence; for words that maintain connection the best position is near the beginning.

3. Putting Similar Ideas in Similar Form

Variety in sentence structure, as we have noted, is in general something to aim at, and monotony something to avoid; but not always. When an author wishes to communicate two or more similar or contrasted thoughts one after the other, he may indicate that relationship by the natural expedient of casting them into similar form. We have already seen that

balance or parallelism, when applied to phrases and clauses within the sentence, contributes force and charm. The same principle when applied to two or more sentences, contributes not only force and charm; it also makes for coherence since it signals similarity of thought. Notice how the thought of the third sentence following links itself naturally to that of the second because it opens in the same way:

Duty is simply the debt which the individual owes to society. If society gives him little, it should demand little. If it gives much—wealth, education, power—society has a right to demand much.

Note again how, in the second, third, and fourth sentences following, the similarity of thought is at once signaled by the similarity of the opening words:

Within a few years of St. Francis' death, the first of his disciples was being hunted on the mountains like a wild beast for his strict fidelity to his master. In 1252 a papal bull approved the use of torture in the investigation of heresy. In 1323 another bull declared that the doctrine of the poverty of Christ and the apostles was heresy. In the same year the Franciscan order alone burned at the stake one hundred and fourteen heretics.

Parallelism is a device capable of a good deal of charm and artistry, but it may become a stale mannerism. The eighteenth century forced every idea into neatly balanced antitheses, and all facts into a series of parallel clauses. Poets "swayed about upon a rocking horse and called it Pegasus." What seems at first to make for clarity and wit, will if overdone become a wearisome affectation. But it is an affectation that

not one American student in a thousand ever assumes. On the contrary, most students care so little for clear, charming, or witty expression that they neglect altogether the useful and artistic device of parallelism.

4. Announcing the Paragraph Plan

Since coherence means keeping clear the relation between the parts, naturally one may attain that end by suggesting or stating near the beginning of a paragraph how the thought is to be developed or into what divisions it falls. This announcement makes it easier for the reader to follow the thought of a particularly systematized or complicated paragraph. But only in such paragraphs is it desirable or necessary. It is a device for special occasions rather than for the average paragraph. It is especially useful for making and keeping clear in the reader's mind the steps in a recipe, experiment, or process; the parts of a mechanism or organization; the method to be followed in a logical proof.

The statement near the beginning of a paragraph that the binding of a book involves three stages practically notifies the reader how the paragraph is to be divided and what relation the divisions bear to each other. A sentence at the head of an editorial paragraph asserting that we should vote for state ownership and control of a certain hydroelectric power plant because it would be as efficient as private operation and much cheaper, is a notification that the paragraph will probably develop these two arguments. A topic sentence which merely announces the subject to be developed

preserves unity. A sentence which shows how the subject is to be developed preserves coherence. It makes clear the relation between the parts.

Coherence is a matter both for prevision and revision. Plan the development of your topic sentence beforehand; see where and how you are going. Do not skip important steps in the thought, but let each new sentence begin where the last left off. Then when the paragraph is complete, go over it to see whether the relation between the parts may be made even clearer by the methods explained above: the insertion of connectives, the placing of words of reference and comparison, the use of parallelism, or, if necessary, by the announcement of the paragraph plan.

EXERCISES

1. Analyze the expository paragraphs in *Modern English Readings* (rev. ed.), pp. 335-40, or in *Models for Writing Prose*, pp. 211-26, pointing out in each case: (a) what logical relationship the sentences have to each other; (b) what methods for securing coherence have been employed.

2. Point out the mechanical aids to coherence in the following paragraphs:

a. Far and away the most profitable industry of Japan is the production of raw silk. In 1919 the country exported to the world at large \$310,873,825 worth. Of this immense total the United States bought no less than \$299,520,354 worth. Out of every \$100 worth, we took more than \$96. Add to raw silk the various forms of silk goods, and you find that in the same year we bought more than \$327,000,000 worth from Japan, which exceeds eighty-seven per cent of that empire's total amount exported. Naturally, Japanese silk producers and manufacturers are not to be found among

those clamoring for war with us. (Walter Pitkin, *Must We Fight Japan?* Century Company.)

b. Since Roosevelt assumed office we have witnessed an evergrowing suspicion that everyone connected with a college, from the president down to the janitors, is tinged with radicalism of some degree, whether it be a mild form of socialism, or an extreme variety of communism. The newspapers have been filled with stories about student demonstrations against war, against R.O.T.C., against the Scottsboro case, against so many things, in fact, that one wondered when students found time to attend classes. In addition to the stories of these demonstrations we have had grotesque tales about the professorial "brain trust" and its mysterious doings. Proceeding on the time-honored adage that where there is smoke there must be fire, we believe that a spirit of radicalism of various shades does exist in our colleges. And further, we believe that our colleges would not be fulfilling their functions if such a spirit of radicalism did not exist. Why? Because if the college does not enlighten the student as to the sorry condition of society, and does not point out ways of at least alleviating the tragedy of want amidst plenty, it should be put to the more productive use of housing a ladies' knitting circle. (*The Aquinas*, St. Thomas College.)

c. In the time of Walpole, this process of interpretation was in full activity. The great French writers were busy in proclaiming through Europe the names of Bacon, of Newton, and of Locke. The English principles of toleration, the English respect for personal liberty, the English doctrine that all power is a trust for the public good, were making rapid progress. There is scarcely anything in history so interesting as that great stirring up of the mind of France, that shaking of the foundations of all established opinions, that uprooting of old truth and old error. It was plain that mighty principles were at work whether for evil or for good. It was plain that a great change in the social system was at hand. Fanatics of one kind might anticipate a golden age,

in which men should live under the simple dominion of reason, in perfect equality and perfect amity, without property, or marriage, or king, or God. A fanatic of another kind might see nothing in the doctrines of the philosophers but anarchy and atheism, might cling more closely to every old abuse, and might regret the good old days when St. Dominic and Simon de Montfort put down the growing heresies of Provence. A wise man would have seen with regret the excesses into which the reformers were running; but he would have done justice to their genius and to their philanthropy. He would have censured their errors; but he would have remembered, that, as Milton has said, error is but opinion in the making. While he condemned their hostility to religion, he would have acknowledged that it was the natural effect of a system under which religion had been constantly exhibited to them in forms which common sense rejected and at which humanity shuddered. While he condemned some of their political doctrines as incompatible with all law, all property, and all civilisation, he would have acknowledged that the subjects of Lewis the Fifteenth had every excuse which men could have for being eager to pull down, and for being ignorant of the far higher art of setting up. While anticipating a fierce conflict, a great and wide-wasting destruction, he would yet have looked forward to the final close with a good hope for France and for mankind. (Macaulay, *Horace Walpole*.)

d. A casual acquaintance once presented to me an epic he had written in rhymed couplets, extending to many cantos. He was a man of bright and vigorous mind, but no poet. So when he set himself to write verse, it is clear that he instinctively tested every word or phrase, and rejected those that failed to sound smooth, familiar, "poetic," to his reminiscent ear. The result is that the whole of his book is made up of counters, and every epithet is studiously obvious. The hero is "dauntless," and his "steed" is "noble," and the sky at night is a "spangled vault," and "spicy perfumes load the balmy air." It is thirty years since that epic was

placed in my hands, and I have often since had occasion to think that it might profitably be used by any teacher of English literature as a text for an ever needed lesson on the counter. "There is no Excellent Beauty that hath not some Strangeness in the Proportion." Or, as Aristotle had said long before, there must be "a certain admixture of unfamiliarity," a continual slight novelty. (Havelock Ellis, *Impressions and Comments*. Houghton Mifflin Company.)

3. Improve by every means possible the coherence of the following paragraphs:

a. Scientists learn by experiment. Morse, Bell, and Marconi gave their results to the world only after years in the laboratory. I am going to tell you how to perform a simple experiment. A plant cannot make starch unless carbon dioxide is present in the air about it. Usually an experiment is divided into two distinct processes.

b. Easter from of old has been known as the festival of festivals. Perhaps to-day in our own country people do not regard it nor celebrate it as such. For instance, the Greeks of to-day may properly call it the chief festival of the year, for they celebrate it with far greater pomp than we do.

c. Who would have supposed that this year's Mask and Bauble company was composed almost entirely of men who had never acted before last September? However, it was due to the rare judgment, patience, enthusiasm, and long experience of Mr. Carlisle that so strong a cast was developed. Twelve of the fourteen members had never heard of make-up nor stood in front of a footlight until they were initiated into the mysteries this fall. The success of the college dramatic season is due in great measure to Mr. Carlisle and also to the brilliant work of the two old stagers, Cox and Milligan.

d. My next step must be to define clearly what I mean by the successful operation of gas-works by the municipality. A utility of this kind may be considered a success when it can offer a high quality of gas at a comparatively low price. Furthermore, are they able to meet adequately the costs of

depreciation and expansion? Are they able to pay as good wages to their workers as do privately operated enterprises of the same type?

e. Alive or dead, Thomas Paine was a challenging and a complex personality. If such utterly dissimilar men as Lincoln and Napoleon both agreed in admiring him, who can disagree? The great Theodore Roosevelt called him "a filthy little atheist." Paine was not filthy, not little, and not an atheist. In other respects Roosevelt was right. I am reminded of Voltaire's famous remark about the Holy Roman Empire—that it was not holy, not Roman, and not an Empire.

4. Write a coherent paragraph of 150 or 200 words on one of the following topics:

a. Fooling the Foe in Football. b. Desk Carvings. c. Why Keep Bees? d. The Reflection of the Seasons in Advertising. e. The Rumble Seat. f. One Evidence of Improvement in American Taste. g. What I Get from Chapel Attendance. h. Wasting Spare Time. i. It Pays to Advertise. j. A Step Forward for the Farmer. k. The Terrors of Hazing. l. Can an Engineer Contribute Something to Politics? m. The Dormitory Nuisance. n. "All-Day Suckers." o. College Buncombe. p. Rah-Rah Boys. q. The Great Lakes.

EMPHASIS

A paragraph may possess unity and coherence and yet lack the essential quality of emphasis—at least emphasis on the right point. It is a sure sign of incompetence in a singer when everything is monotonously *moderato* or *fortissimo*, and nothing stands out from the rest. Even more absurd is it when the emphasis comes at the wrong point, and the passage that should be softly cooed is bellowed, or vice versa. A soloist who made these errors in emphasis would see his audi-

ence trickling rapidly away through the back door. Likewise, the writer who stresses nothing or stresses without judgment or discrimination, would find his reader's attention lagging or concentrating on the wrong thing.

In every paragraph there are, or should be, matters of less and matters of greater importance. Most important of all is the question, the conclusion, the result, the illustration to which the whole leads—the *raison d'être* of the paragraph. To stamp this point on the reader's mind is the problem of emphasis. The test of good emphasis is whether the reader on finishing the paragraph is sharply aware of this point.

Three ways of driving home the point deserve to be considered: expression, repetition, and position.

1. Emphatic Expression

Emphatic expression is not peculiarly a matter of paragraphing but of writing in general. Nevertheless when a writer is wondering how to make the point of a paragraph more sharply he cannot afford to neglect what he has learned about effective words and effective sentences. For the paragraph cannot fail to acquire new force when its main idea is expressed through forceful words and forceful sentences. All that you have learned about the striking, the concrete word, all that you have learned about effective forms of sentence structure should come into play here. Do not rest content with vague abstractions. Do not let a flabby sentence carry the ball in the crucial play. If you have forgotten all you have learned about vital

diction and effective sentence structure, turn back to the pages that deal with these matters and refresh your memory. Pungent with humor, vivid with color or movement, rich in stirring association, whatever may be the source of its power, the sentence which carries the vital thought must print itself on the reader's imagination. The impression which a paragraph makes depends partly on the vigorous expression of its main thought.

Here, for example, are forceful sentences, which naturally add much to the power of the paragraphs in which they occur:

Now it is perfectly certain, first, that the letters are very bad; secondly, that they are spurious; and thirdly, that, whether they be bad or good, spurious or genuine, Temple could know nothing of the matter; inasmuch as he was no more able to construe a line of them than to decipher an Egyptian obelisk. (Macaulay.)

As we read the history, we say at one moment, "These men were mail-clad ruffians," and at the next, "What great-hearted gentlemen!" (Crothers.)

In the same way, the excitement of a good talk lives for a long while after in the blood, the heart still hot within you, the brain still simmering, the physical earth swimming around you with the colors of the sunset. (Stevenson.)

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. (Emerson.)

EXERCISES

1. Point out what elements of emphasis there are in each of the sentences listed above, considering (a) choice of words, (b) mood or tone, (c) sentence structure.

2. Write or rewrite a paragraph in accordance with the instructions given in Exercise 4, p. 173, and make a special

effort to see that the most important sentences are vigorous in expression.

3. Rewrite the following sentences in order to give them emphatic expression:

a. Whatever other people may say about Mr. Hoover I rather think he is sincere.

b. The next war may turn out to be an unpleasant surprise to those who speak of naval rivalry, Nicaraguan expeditions, the increased range of aircraft, and other such things as if they were matters for light conversation.

c. The observance of the honor system means a great deal to the college.

d. Among the doctrines set forth by the founder of our religion there is one which bids us be on friendly terms with our neighbors.

e. The delinquencies of government officials have done considerable harm in this country and have made many people feel as if the government departments needed some revision.

f. I have read Hardy's *Return of the Native*, and I think it is a fine book.

2. *Emphatic Repetition*

Often repetition is necessary to clarify an idea; it may also serve to enforce. It sometimes consists of reiterating a phrase as Burke did in his well-known paragraph on liberty, or as Matthew Arnold rang the changes on a few striking *leitmotifs* in the following paragraph from *Culture and Anarchy*.

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness and light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works

only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater!—the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we all come to the perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. . . . Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organizations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas as it uses them itself, freely—nourished, and not bound by them.

Another form of repetition for the sake of emphasis is not to repeat a word or a phrase, but to repeat an idea in varying words and phrases. The average reader retains little enough even of the strongest writing after twenty-four hours. To the degree, therefore, that an idea is important, it must be struck not once, but hammered in. Hammering does not mean substituting different phrases for exactly the same thought. A paragraph in which all the sentences clothed exactly the same idea in a different disguise of language would be ridiculous. It is a palpable crudity to write: "Burnett owed the greater part of his Nature-loving instinct to his inheritance. The essential characteristic which he inherited from his parents was his

love of Nature." Any sane reader resents this juggling with synonyms. He expects, and he has a right to expect, that though the same idea may be presented to him many times, it shall acquire new clarity, new pungency, or greater completeness. The first sentence about Burnett, for example, might be followed by something like this: "From his parents he received the instinct to observe every sight and sound of the wilderness and the power to vibrate to its beauty." The original idea has now gained sensibly in clarity and force. Sentences should not mark time. Even though they sometimes come around eventually to a summary which repeats the topic sentence in almost identical words, yet the sentences themselves must keep moving, adding to the content or the intensity of the paragraph. The words of a summary may be familiar, but they should have acquired from the preceding matter new lucidity, new body, new power. Artistic repetition always does more than repeat.

EXERCISE

Study carefully the paragraph quoted from Arnold as an example of emphasis by studied repetition of phrases and by repetition of the central idea in constantly completer form. Then write a paragraph of about the same length with some *leitmotif* such as: parlor "pinks," bigger and better wars, the antifraternal fraternity, sport for sport's sake, Hearst, the patriot.

3. *Emphatic Position*

It is a well-recognized fact that the parts of a paragraph that stand out above the rest in a reader's

mind are the beginning and the end. A given sentence placed in the middle of a paragraph does not get as much attention as the same sentence placed in either of the strategic positions. How often one remembers the opening scene in a novel and nothing else! how often the last words on which the curtain goes down in a play are printed on one's mind when one could not repeat another line! Every intelligent writer will take advantage of this psychological fact and apply it not only to sentences but also to larger units of discourse—the argument, the editorial, the technical exposition.

The beginning of a paragraph is often used to advantage as a conspicuous place for a sentence that deserves emphasis. One should not hesitate so to place a sentence whenever it is readily understood either as relating itself to the preceding paragraph or as introducing a new branch of thought. Then it is good tactics to let the reader's eye fall at once on a crucial or significant train of thought. But the advantage is gained at too great a cost if the thought is introduced too abruptly and leaves the reader wondering in bewilderment, "Well, what has that to do with what I've just read?" Coherence rather than emphasis should be the paramount consideration in opening a paragraph.

The end, therefore, is the one position devoted solely to the function of stressing the point of the paragraph. It is a gross error in strategy to close on insignificances, leftovers, incidental remarks, afterthoughts. Whatever the purpose of the paragraph may be, the reader should not be allowed to forget that purpose at the close. This does not mean that every

paragraph must end with a summary sentence. Often application or illustration will make a more vivid impression than the general thought; or it may be that it is not the situation or fact that a writer wishes to stress, but its result or cause. In other words, the emphatic close may or may not include the whole thought, as does a summary; it is only essential that it present a facet of the thought that deserves special attention.

EXERCISES

1. Study the opening sentences in the specimen paragraphs in *Modern English Readings* (revised edition), pp. 335-40, or in *Models for Writing Prose*, pp. 211-26. Which are mainly transitional sentences, making for the connection of thought? Which are also emphatic? Which are mainly emphatic? Study the concluding sentences. What is their relation to the main thought of the paragraph? What forceful elements do they possess besides their position?

2. What factors contribute to emphasis in the following paragraphs?

a. The demon by which the German people is possessed is no night fear of the Middle Ages. To say, as has been done, that National-Socialism is a throwback to medievalism is to misunderstand the movement. The demon is the old pagan demon which the Christian Middle Ages sought to exorcise and to drive out forever. German nationalism to-day is a revolt against Christianity in its broadest as well as in its deepest sense; it is a pagan revolt against the whole of Christian civilization; it dreams, spinning like a dervish, of Nordic armies overrunning the earth, of berserker rage in battle, of the ecstasy of death and blood. To think of the Nazis merely as hoodlums and fools stung into action by hunger and demagogues is greatly to underestimate both the force and the menace of the movement, which has its mad but highly articulate prophets, which has at the core

of its inner circle as its ultimate leader (Führer), of whom the Hitlers and Goebbels are only vulgar echoes, that extraordinarily gifted poet, Stefan George. Many years ago George prayed for Sicilian Vespers; in 1922 he called to his disciples that it was too late, according to the decree of heaven, for "patience or potion." No,

Ten thousand must the holy madness seize,
Ten thousand must the sacred pestilence slay
And tens of thousands more the holy war.

Well, we are witnessing the "holy madness" and the sacred pestilence," are we not? Let us beware of the "holy war." (Ludwig Lewisohn.)

b. We learn on unimpeachable authority that a certain group of amateur athletes have been offered free board for life at the training table of their home organization. A new road has been built into their home town by which they alone may enter it. The most expensive sculptors of their time have been engaged to perpetuate their forms, and the most esteemed poets to record their achievements in deathless verse. It is even whispered that their images have been set up in places of worship, and that before them religious ceremonies have been performed. Where and when, you ask, did these fantastic absurdities take place? According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in Greece of the days of Pericles, that golden age of time when man led an intellectual life of sanity, measure, and harmony, now forgotten in this his latter end of folly. (*Cornell Alumni News*.)

c. What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net-purport and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five-hundred souls. From these, by certain "Natural Enemies" of the French, there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men: Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them: she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and

the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing they are selected; all dressed in red; and shipped away, at the public charges, some two-thousand miles, or say only to the south of Spain; and fed there till wanted. And now to that same spot, in the south of Spain, are thirty similar French artisans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending: till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition; and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word "Fire!" is given: and they blow the souls out of one another; and in place of sixty brisk, useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury, and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest! They lived far enough apart; were the entirest strangers; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even, unconsciously, by Commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! Their governors had fallen out: and instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot. Alas, so is it in Deutschland, and hitherto in all other lands; still as of old, "what devilry soever Kings do, the Greeks must pay the piper!" In that fiction of the English Smollett, it is true the final Cessation of War is perhaps prophetically shadowed forth; where the two Natural Enemies, in person, take each a tobacco-pipe filled with Brimstone; light the same, and smoke in one another's faces, till the weaker gives in: but from such predicted Peace-Era, what blood-filled trenches and contentious centuries may still divide us! (Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*.)

d. As a matter of fact, a great scientist is very lucky if in his own day he receives such recognition as a Nobel prize. Willard Gibbs, the father of modern physical chemistry, was probably the greatest American scientist of the nineteenth century. He was so far recognized by his contemporaries as to be made a professor, though I cannot believe that his lectures were very intelligible. His sister

habitually compelled him to drive her round in her buggy, on the ground that her husband was a business man and could not spare the time. (J. B. S. Haldane, *Possible Worlds*. Harper & Brothers.)

e. What a strange fate it is that made England! A little ledge of beautiful land in the ocean, to draw and to keep all the men in Europe who had the sea in their hearts and the wind in their brains, daring children of Nature, greedy enough and romantic enough to trust their fortunes to waves and to gales. The most eccentric of peoples, all the world says, and the most acquisitive, made to be pirates and made to be poets, a people that have fastened their big teeth into every quarter of the globe and flung their big hearts in song at the feet of Nature, and even done both things at the same time. The man who wrote the most magnificent sentence in the English language was a pirate and died on the scaffold. (Havelock Ellis, *Impressions and Comments*. Houghton Mifflin Company.)

4. Write an emphatic paragraph on one of these topics :

a. My hero. b. The dentist. c. Advertising. d. The Bible. e. Jazz. f. Thanksgiving dinners. g. The "tabloid" newspaper. h. "College Humor." i. Camping. j. Campus politics. k. The farm crisis. l. "Keeping up with the Joneses." m. Real sportsmanship. n. First love. o. Soak the poor.

5. Make the following paragraph more coherent and emphatic :

Germany did not like the extension of French influence in Morocco. In July 1911 she put forward a claim to Agadir. Both France and England sent warships there, and Germany relinquished her claims. In 1911 the Italian government demanded that Turkey, Germany's ally, consent to her occupying Tripoli and Cyrenaica. Germany did not like it, but Turkey had to yield in 1912.

Unless one is writing particularly fervid or persuasive or plangent prose, emphasis is a quality that

does not need constant attention; it does not pervade the whole paragraph as do unity and coherence. But emphasis of position should never be neglected. No paragraph should end in anticlimax. A large part of the secret of good exposition and argument lies in watching beginnings to see that they fit on to what has gone before, and watching endings to see that they stress, not inconsequential details and afterthoughts, but the essentials. Though here and there an exception may be found that can justify itself, yet, by and large, the rule holds good that writing is coherent in so far as the beginnings readily attach themselves in the reader's mind to what is already there; and writing is emphatic in structure in so far as the endings leave stamped on the reader's mind points worthy of emphasis.

Unity, coherence, and emphasis, then, are simply technical names for such sheer common-sense rules as having a point, letting your reader know what it is, and sticking to it; making it easy for him to follow your development of the point by keeping clear the relation of each step to the next; making sure that when he closes the paragraph, he is in no danger of forgetting that point or at least some important phase of it. The engineer has a set procedure when he projects a dam; the lawyer has a set procedure for drawing up a brief. The procedure for arranging an expository or argumentative paragraph which we have laid down is essentially as practical and sound as either; it is logical and it works.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARAGRAPH

It is an abnormal situation when a person with an idea to convey does not know how to develop it. Usually the man who wants to say that women are fools or the woman who wants to return the compliment does not lack means to enlarge on the topic. Neither is the man who believes his car better than his neighbor's at a loss for ways to elucidate and emphasize his contention. It is a natural and easy thing for most intelligent persons to develop a topic. But occasionally a person may be so sparing of words, so little expansive that it requires a huge effort to get further than the simple statement of his point. He hates to waste words, even though they make his meaning clearer and add weight to his opinion. There are others too young to have thought out their ideas, or too limited in the art of expression to know of more than one way of expressing them. Such persons, though they may be highly intelligent, when called on to expand a given thought into a paragraph, cannot get beyond a few sentences, and these are likely to be awkward and repetitious.

When, therefore, one is at a loss to develop a topic, when one has written, for example, "I am very fond of pineapple sundae," and has scratched one's head for fifteen minutes without evolving another sentence, it may come as a godsend to learn that there are many ways in which that uninspiring topic may be developed into a moderately interesting paragraph. These ways need not, and should not, all be applied to the same topic in the same paragraph. One alone will often serve

the purpose, and two or three may round out a full, clear, and interesting treatment. Let us briefly glance over some possible ways of development:

1. Repetition in other words, adding to the clarity and force of the remark. For example, one might add to the sentence quoted above: "In fact, I confess to being a pineapple-sundae addict."

2. Giving details or examples: "I have been known, when the craving came over me once in the woods, to walk over a corduroy road to the nearest drugstore, seven and a half miles away."

3. Assigning origin or cause: "The seeds of this mania were planted in me in my infancy, when my nurse, in order to induce me to drink milk, which I hated, used to mix in a liberal flavoring of pineapple."

4. Stating or prognosticating results: "Of this innocent stratagem the unexpected result is that one proprietor of a soda fountain in my home town was able to retire on his profits before he was fifty, and another migrated to Wall Street with a tidy fortune—and lost it."

5. Comparison with similar ideas or phenomena: "My feeling for pineapple sundae is like the feeling of an Englishman for roast beef, or of a Scotchman for oatmeal; it is more than a mere appetite; it is a point of distinction, a centre of loyalties."

6. Contrast with dissimilar ideas or phenomena: "When I approach the soda counter, it is not with the crude notion of satisfying an internal void and hurrying away, like a taxi driver in an automat: my sips are long and lingering."

The subject chosen may seem frivolous, a *reductio ad absurdum* of paragraph development. But these same means can be and are used to expound such serious topics as academic solemnity. Or they might illuminate such topics as the menace of smoking or professionalism in athletics or parlor tricks or hypnotism or the United States Supreme Court. Of course, no intelligent person will adopt any of these methods of developing a point unless it does add to the interest, clearness, or force of the idea. They are not to be applied as mechanical formulæ. In fact, no one full of his subject and intent on expounding it needs to think of these devices; he will use them automatically. And it is in order that the use of them may become automatic and discreet that they are here called to the student's attention.

EXERCISES

1. Point out methods of development used in any five expository paragraphs in a book of selections.

2. Write a composition of at least three paragraphs, carefully constructed to conform to the principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis, on one of the following topics:

a. The American college, which is supposed to encourage intellectual development, offers its greatest rewards, not to the strongest brains, but, first to the strongest arms and legs, and then, to the strongest lungs.

b. Machinery produces a hundred times as much to-day as was produced by the old handicraft methods, but the average man is only three or four times as well fed, clothed, and housed, and the conditions of his labor are often worse.

c. The river-fronts of our cities are hideous, whereas they might be beautiful.

d. American taste in music is improving.

- e. Unearned luxury is demoralizing for college students.
- f. The decline in church attendance is the result of several causes.
- g. Why does American slang contain so many synonyms for "bunk"?
- h. Is pugilism degrading?
- i. A course on the Great War, including the reading of first-hand accounts of what it meant to diplomats, generals, and fighters, is desirable.

CHAPTER VII

BUILDING THE RESEARCH ARTICLE

WE need a new form of literary ambition if scientific knowledge is to reach a fair proportion of the population and the scientific mood is to be widely cultivated. This ambition should be to bring home to the greatest possible number of readers as much knowledge as possible, in the most pleasing, effective, and least misleading manner. Few indeed there be who have this ambition, combined with the requisite knowledge, skill, and sympathetic imagination to achieve it."

So spoke James Harvey Robinson in his pregnant little book, *The Humanizing of Knowledge*. Of course, Robinson was saying in different words precisely what Arnold said in his chapter on sweetness and light; in fact, the title of Robinson's book, *The Humanizing of Knowledge*, is taken from that chapter. For both believe that culture involves making current everywhere the best that has been thought and known in the world. And if our colleges really believe in a broad and not a narrow culture, surely they must train men "to bring home to the greatest possible number of readers" the results of their study "in the most pleasing, effective, and least misleading manner possible."

This responsibility may seem very remote to the freshman, who knows all too little to consider himself in the rôle of enlightener of the masses. Let the sophomores, who know all things, undertake the task, but the freshman has still a becoming sense of his limitations. Nevertheless, both in college and out, he will be asked to present the results of his investigation or of his experience in the form of reports, papers, lectures, sermons, articles, theses, or editorials. In college the impression he makes upon his history or biology teacher may depend in no small degree on his ability to organize his material logically and present it imaginatively. After graduation his effectiveness depends in no small degree on his ability to make others want to read what he has written. Archæologist or engineer, politician or merchant, banker or explorer, he stands to gain if people say when he has presented his views on paper, "What a grasp he has of his subject! How fascinatingly plain he makes it! How logically he presents his case!"

If, therefore, we now take up the building of the long expository article, it is because this exercise presents a problem intimately associated with the requirements of college and the needs and opportunities of life. If you can fulfill the assignment, demanding as it does accurate and extended research, simplification of aim, choice and organization of material, clarity, charm, and force of presentation, then you may rest assured that you possess an art that will stand you in good stead in days to come.

Though the principles involved are the same as those already treated in the chapter on Simple Explanation,

yet their application is now more difficult. There is a difference between putting up a frame bungalow and erecting a thirty room countryhouse.

CHOOSING THE SUBJECT

In choosing the subject for a research article it is the purpose of both instructor and student that the student should gain as much as possible from the task of composition. The subject should be neither too technical nor too abstruse to be beyond his comprehension. Moreover, it should have at least the possibility of enlisting his interest and enthusiasm. That does not mean that it must deal with sports, dances, agriculture, business, or household science. Far from it; a student is likely to gain more by letting his interests browse in fresh fields than by keeping them trotting around in the same old paddock. Nevertheless it is a rare student who can be plunged into philosophy, language study, law, or any highly technical science or art, and gain anything but discouragement from the experience.

It must also be taken into account that since a student is bound to seek guidance from his instructor, he is likely to profit more from a subject with which the instructor is at least somewhat familiar. Otherwise the blind may lead the blind, and both fall into the pit. Obviously, the teacher is a far more competent guide if he has dabbled in the subject himself. Indeed he is justified in listing a set of topics from which the student must choose, provided they are sufficiently varied and human to offer everyone something to his

taste. Only when the student is allowed to use his composition to satisfy the requirements of another course and therefore will receive competent guidance in selection and organization from another instructor, should he be allowed to take a topic totally new to his rhetoric instructor. Nine students out of ten will need help in bibliography, note-taking, and outlining, not to mention criticism of their expression; if the instructor in composition cannot give that help, who will?

Still another condition affects the choice or limitation of a subject. A research article should not be a mere warming-over of other people's work, a mere paraphrase of their words. The student will gain more if the nature of the subject forces him to do some original thinking and organizing. It is easy to assign topics which require originality of treatment. They may require a comparison between old times, and modern: The Medieval and the Modern Flapper; Agriculture in Colonial Times and Agriculture To-day; the Water Supply of Rome and of New York. Or the student may be set to comparing two persons, systems, books, or what not: A Contrast of Edison's Methods with Steinmetz'; Varying Views of Washington's Character; Moscow in 1910 and in 1935. Or he may be required to select material from his sources on some not too hackneyed principle: The Human and Humorous Side of the Bayeux Tapestry; Signs of the Artistic and Decorative Impulse in the Early Poetry of William Morris; Those Un-puritanic Puritans. Or he may have to draw his own conclusions regarding printed materials: after studying the front pages of three newspapers for two weeks he may write on Col-

oring the News; or by reading the files of the college magazine fifty years ago and those of to-day he may write an essay on Undergraduate Literary Fashions. There is no more valuable experience in the art of composition than to analyze a subject and plan its treatment.

Below are a number of subjects which can be adapted to serve as subjects for the research paper. Note that many of them are too broad in scope and need to be limited in ways to be suggested later.

Literary: Hardy's Literary Treatment of Women; Three Tartars in English Poetry—Cambuscan, Tamburlane, Kubla Khan; The Charm of Pastoral Poetry; The Real and the Legendary Charlemagne; American and English Ballads; More's *Utopia* and Bellamy's *Looking Backward*; The Treatment of Joan of Arc in Shakespear and in Shaw; Do We Need Another Thoreau?; The Tragedy of John Keats; Hazlitt, the Pugnacious; De Quincey, the Eccentric; How Coleridge Composed the *Ancient Mariner*; Walt Whitman's War Service; War Poetry—Idealistic and Disillusioned; Marryat and Melville; Are Cooper's Indians Romanticized?

Historical: American Policy toward the Indians; Loyola and Luther; Woman and the Medieval Church; The Spanish Missions; Utopian Experiments in America; Czarism in Russia; Wat Tyler, Socialist; Lincoln and the Mexican War; The Viking Discovery of America; The Inquisition; The Two Roosevelts; The Origins of the Spanish-American War.

Religious: Deism and Modernism; The Composition of the Gospels; The Theology of *Paradise Lost*; The Book of Job; Sun-Worship among the Indians and Mexicans; Euripides and Greek Religion; The Spiritual Franciscans; The Religion of Franklin, Washington, and Jefferson; Healing by Faith; The Need for a New Canon of the Scriptures; The Ideal Monastery.

Artistic: The Kelmscott Press; A Greek Temple Restored; Who Built the Cathedrals?; How Enamels Are Made; Modern Tapestry Weaving; Japanese Prints and Whistler's Paintings; The Skyscraper as an Architectural Discovery; Whistler as a Wit; The Art of the Bookplate; Art under the New Deal.

Scientific: Galileo; Roger Bacon; From Atoms to Electrons; Mental Tests; Vitamins; The Train of the Future; The Ultra-Violet Ray; Progress in Poison Gases; The Effects of Alcohol on the System; The Canals on Mars; Scientific Results of Polar Exploration; The Principles of Television; How Old Is the Earth?; What Remains of Darwin's Theories To-day?

Educational: The Universities in Nazi Germany; Student Government in Medieval Universities; Milton's Conception of Education; Socrates, the Educator; Cambridge and the English Poets; Tennyson's *Princess* and the Woman's College of To-day; — College (or University) Fifty Years Ago.

Miscellaneous: Remedies for Soil Erosion; Frauds of Advertising; Coöperative Stores; Liquor Control in Sweden and in the State of —; Strike-Breaking; Race Suicide; The Meaning of Socialized Medicine; Why Do Slums Exist?; Sharecroppers; Protecting Our Rivers; The Yankee Clipper; Zionism; Greek Athletic Carnivals; Telepathy; America's Effect on the Immigrant; The Nature of the Next War; The Consistency of Politicians.

MAKING A TENTATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

The subject once chosen, the next step is to get at the best sources of information. One must be something of a detective. For though there are clues galore to be found in any library, it is no easy matter to sort out the clues that lead to the big caches. The difficulty is to get the best books and articles for one's purpose. How is it to be done?

There are two modes of procedure, depending on whether the subject has so lately come into prominence that no books or few are available on it, or whether it is old enough to be covered both by books and periodicals. In the first case, consult the *New York Times Index*, published quarterly, for references to pages in the *Times* where the matter is treated. Then consult the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*, both the recent monthly issues and the annual volumes. If your subject is concerned with government, social reform, economics, or commerce, go to the bi-monthly bulletins of the *Public Affairs Information Service*. The various year-books are likely to give authoritative and reliable, though sometimes meager, information on matters occurring during the last or earlier years. The *New International Year Book* gives the best general account of the activities of the world in science, art, literature, politics, religion, international relations, and so forth. Facts and statistics regarding the United States are most conveniently found in the *American Year Book*, the *American Labor Year Book*, the *Chicago Daily News Almanac*, and the *World Almanac*; regarding the public affairs of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth, in the *Annual Register* and the *Statesman's Year Book*. In brief, when you are concerned with matters that have come to public attention only within the last few months or years consult the *Times Index*, the *Readers' Guide*, and the appropriate year-books. On no account should you miss the selective bibliographies in the year-books, for these will most quickly refer you to the best recent material.

In reliability the year-books usually excel the articles in the periodicals, but they are likely to be inferior in fulness of treatment and in suggestive commentary. It is wise to get one's basic facts from the most authoritative source but to round them out with material from the best magazines. These are the *American Mercury*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Commonweal*, *Common Sense*, *Forum*, *Harper's*, *Living Age*, *Nation*, *New Republic*, *North American Review*, *Scribner's*, *Survey*, *World's Work*, *Yale Review*. Such periodicals as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Liberty* occasionally publish an article that is not Wall Street propaganda. Always, too, one must judge magazine articles by the official position of the author, or by the evidence of his special familiarity with the subject, or by the sense for accuracy and freedom from prejudice which he displays.

If the subject you have chosen is not an affair of the last ten years, then your procedure will be different. Though it will still be profitable to use the *Reader's Guide* and the year-books for the latest developments, nevertheless much of the labor of selection has already been done for you. Bibliographies already exist on your general subject, referring you to the best books and articles; and your task is reduced to finding out which items offer the most readable, reliable, and complete treatment of your special phase.

The best sources of selective bibliography are the general cyclopedias, the special cyclopedias, and the other works of reference in special fields. One thinks first of the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, a magnificent review of knowledge and

civilization up to the year 1929. But one should also remember the eleventh edition; for, though less recent, it is on many matters far fuller. With both editions consult the index and find the articles which give the fullest treatment of your subject. At the end of most articles you will observe a list of selected titles; look through these to see which are actually concerned with your subject, are written in languages you read, and do not sound too technical. Some American matters are treated more fully in the *New International Encyclopædia* and the *Encyclopedia Americana*.

The special cyclopedias and reference works are too numerous to mention, but these are some of the chief:

Religion: J. Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*; P. Schaff, *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*; *Catholic Encyclopedia*; *Jewish Encyclopedia*.

History: *New Larned History for Ready Reference*; *Cambridge Ancient History*; *Cambridge Medieval History*; *Cambridge Modern History*.

Biography: *Dictionary of National* (British) *Biography*; *Dictionary of American Biography* (in course of publication); *Who's Who* (biographical data on living British subjects); *Who's Who in America* (biographical data on living Americans).

Literature: *Cambridge History of American Literature*; *Cambridge History of English Literature*; Manly and Rickert, *Contemporary American Literature*; Manly and Rickert, *Contemporary British Literature*; *Columbia University Course in Literature*; *Oxford Companion to English Literature*.

Government: McLaughlin and Hart, *Cyclopedia of American Government*.

Agriculture: L. H. Bailey, *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture*; L. H. Bailey, *Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture*.

Education: P. Monroe, *Cyclopedia of Education*.

Physical Science: J. M. Cattell, *American Men of Science*; G. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*.

Social Science: E. R. A. Seligman, *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*; *London Bibliography of the Social Sciences*.

These works, which are to be found in the reference room of every good library, will serve to indicate to you what is the best material existing on your subject. But you need the full use of your wits to make sure that you have got all the right clues. Have you looked at the indices if there are any? Have you thought of all the probable headings? For example: have you looked for mental tests under "psychology" or "intelligence," for coins under "numismatics," for Czarism under "Russia" or "Tsar," for the medieval flapper under "Woman, History, Medieval," or under "History, Medieval, Social"? It is only by persistent and ingenious effort of this kind that it is possible to find what you are after.

When you have found these lists, the next step is to make an intelligent selection of articles to read. Many of the titles will not be concerned with your subject at all. Others will be in languages you cannot read. These should be omitted. But do not assume that be-

cause a title is very general the work will have nothing to say on your subject. If it consists of many volumes or pages, it may be better even than some more restricted title. Copy off the items that suit your needs, giving carefully the name and initials of the author, the full title of the work, and the place and date of publication. Though very few scholars include the name of the publisher, some instructors in composition require students to provide this information also. In the case of magazine articles copy the author's name, title of the article, name of the periodical, volume, date, and pages covered by the article. Expand all abbreviations, and follow exactly the form prescribed.

A bibliography of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* might take the following form:

Aurner, N. S. "Sir Thomas Malory—Historian?" *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XLVIII (1933), 362-91.

Baugh, A. C. "Documenting Sir Thomas Malory." *Speculum*, VIII (1933), 3-29.

Chambers, E. K. *Sir Thomas Malory* (English Association Pamphlet, No. 51). London, 1922.

Malory, T. *Le Morte D'arthur*, ed. H. O. Sommer. London, 1889-91.

Schofield, W. H. *Chivalry in English Literature*. Cambridge, Mass., 1912.

Scudder, V. D. *Le Morte Darthur of Sir Thomas Malory, A Study of the Book and Its Sources*. London, New York, 1921.

Vinaver, E. *Malory*. Oxford, 1929.

A bibliography on the subject of English as a universal language might run as follows:

Schinz, Albert. "Will English Be the International Language?" *North American Review*, CLXXXIX (1909), 760-79.

Guérard, Albert L. "English as an International Language." *Popular Science Monthly*, LXXIX (1911), 337-45.

Vizetelly, Frank H. "The Coming World Language." *Dial*, LIX (1915), 312-13.

Porterfield, Allen W. "English, a World Language." *Bookman*, LVII (1923), 111-13.

Dominguez, C. Villalobos. "The Language of the Future." *Living Age*, CCCXXXVII (1923), 105-10.

Ogden, C. K. "Basic English." *Saturday Review of Literature*, V (1929), 1193.

Before reading further, note in detail the precise form of these entries, since it is in this form that you are expected to submit not only your tentative but also your revised and improved bibliography. The author of every article or book should be mentioned first, and his initials at least should be given. The title of an article should be enclosed in quotation marks; the title of a book or a periodical should be italicized in print, underlined in manuscript or in typewriting. The title of a periodical should be followed by the number of the volume in Roman numerals, the year in parentheses, and the pages covered by the article in Arabic numerals. The title of a book should be followed by the place and date of publication. It is desirable to arrange the items in some order—alphabetically as in the first example, or chronologically as in the second. Follow the form here prescribed consistently down to the least detail of punctuation, for to do so will be excellent training in accuracy and system.

Unless the treatment of the subject in one of the cyclopedias is specially good and full, it should not be included in the bibliography. But even without including any titles of reference works themselves, you should easily secure a dozen or even fifty titles on almost any subject, especially if it has been treated in the periodicals. When all the best titles are copied out neatly and accurately in the form prescribed, the preliminary bibliography is complete and may be handed to the instructor for criticism and further suggestions.

Now this preliminary bibliography is not a list of books and articles that you must read; it is a list from which to select. From a dozen books you may easily eliminate three or four, read a chapter or two from six, and actually read through only two or three. How should you go about it?

A sensible person, unless he already knows just what books are most profitable, will first read an authoritative, introductory account of his general subject, such as he will find in the best works of reference. He must explore the terrain and acquire some vague standards of what's what.

Next, he will select from his bibliography as many titles as the rules of the library will permit him to have at a time, naturally choosing those that seem most promising. He will send for these, or, if he is allowed, remove them from the shelves, and take them to his desk. Next, he will sample each one, to see if it is too technical, too trashy, too antiquated, or too meagre. After a glance at the table of contents and a page or two of text, he will be able to detect whether the book is likely to furnish sound, up-to-date, full

information. He will retain those books that stand the test, return the others, and if necessary, send for more. In half or three quarters of an hour he should be amply supplied with books, and should be ready to begin serious reading.

Some suggestions as to reading are in order. The table of contents and index often save time by referring one directly to desired material. It is well to be on the watch for footnotes or other guides to books and articles that seem to promise fuller discussions of interesting points and that deserve a place in one's bibliography. These should be added to one's list. But on no account should one begin taking notes till he has formed some idea of what is to be the controlling purpose of his article.

FIXING THE CONTROLLING PURPOSE

Whereas in a short exposition on a simple topic there is not much danger of aimless wandering, there is a grave danger of doing so when the subject, even though limited, suggests several different lines of development. Suppose you have chosen as your subject English and American Universities or Those Un-puritanical Puritans. Obviously a book could be written on either of these subjects, even though you are already more limited than if you had selected as your subject English Universities or The Puritans. You could spend months in accumulating notes, and still feel that there was much more that you might profitably investigate. That feeling would do you credit; but you would get very little credit for it if your

theme were late or lacking in point or system. Therefore, it behooves you early to find out what you want to say that can be adequately said in a few thousand words. Fix your controlling purpose.

One student, in spite of the urgent advice of his instructor, insisted on taking as the topic for his 2500 word article Ancient Commerce in the Mediterranean. The result was most unhappy. He had not finished taking notes when the article was due. When he attempted to write it, he was so overwhelmed that after composing twenty pages or more without coming within sight of the end, he abandoned in despair article, course, and college altogether. And yet he was an intelligent student. The moral is an old one: do not bite off more than you can chew. Or, in less figurative terms, choose a controlling purpose to fit your space.

To fix a controlling purpose means to state in a sentence the gist, the point of the article. If your general subject is English and American Universities, your controlling purpose might be: English universities contrive to make the intellectual life more alluring than do the American. Or it might be: American universities offer a more varied curriculum than do the English. If your general subject is Those Un-puritanical Puritans, your controlling purpose naturally is: The popular notion of Puritan asceticism is considerably exaggerated. If your general subject is Ancient Man, your limited subject might be the Teeth of Ancient Man, and your controlling purpose: Why were the teeth of ancient man far stronger than ours? If your general subject is Stonewall Jackson, your limited subject might be Jackson's military genius, and your

controlling purpose: Jackson was the most brilliant strategist of the Civil War. Naturally the more original, the more striking or vital the controlling purpose, the more likely the article is to catch and hold the attention of your readers.

It is well to avoid a purpose which seems to call mainly for narrative or argument. Let us suppose the subject is St. Francis. A biographical sketch consisting of names, dates, incidents would not be exposition and probably would be dull in the extreme. One might almost make it a rule: Include only such biographical data and such narrative elements as contribute to your expository purpose. There will not be room for more.

On the other hand, there is danger in selecting too controversial a purpose. Is it the problem of the stigmata of St. Francis? Did he actually show in his hands and feet scars as of one crucified? Beware of such a subject if there is danger of your becoming argumentative, for this is an exercise in exposition. If you have had no training in logic and the laws of evidence, you are likely to put up a poor case, full of rash assertions and reeking with bias. But if you can control yourself enough to treat the subject as a fascinating problem, explaining all the circumstances and presenting, more or less impartially, what others have urged on both sides, then your purpose will remain compatible with the purposes of exposition. You might formulate it as follows: The stigmata of St. Francis constitute a religious and psychological problem worthy of serious attention.

As you do your preliminary reading, then, constantly ask yourself: "What is there in this subject

that is alive, appealing, stirring? What is there about it that I want to pass on to my friends? Just mere facts, or facts that have a meaning, a point, an edge?" Of course, in any group of facts there are a hundred meanings. Find the meaning that stirs you most. Make that your controlling purpose. You will save yourself hours of wasted labor, and you will give your reader too, if your purpose is clear, the satisfaction of realizing that he is "getting somewhere."

Thus far you have taken the following steps: 1. You have chosen a general subject that is not too technical or abstruse and in which you can secure competent guidance. 2. You have taken an angle of approach or made a comparison that will require original planning. 3. You have made out a tentative bibliography, and begun reading. 4. You have formulated a controlling purpose that does not permit mainly narrative or argumentative treatment.

TAKING NOTES

With a supply of serviceable books and magazines spread on the desk, a controlling purpose fixed in your mind, and a package of slips or cards on which to take notes, you are now ready to gather the material for your article. This material must be gathered note by note, and then systematized, or else, when you come to build your theme, you will have forgotten where those particular facts which you wish to fit into your structure are to be found. Then you will have to make a separate search for each fact or quotation, lose hours

of time, and break up the continuity of your thought. To take accurate notes is to save time.

Notes should be taken on small cards or slips of uniform size. Not more than one note should go on one card, though one note may cover several cards. The top line should be left vacant in order that later a brief indication of the classification may be inserted. The second line should contain an exact reference as to the source, and should give: (1) the last name of the author; (2) a brief title of the book, or the name and volume of the periodical; (3) the page or pages. Besides, for every book or article actually used, one bibliographical card should be made out giving the *full* name of the author, the *full* title of the book and its date of publication; or in the case of magazine articles, the title of the article, the name and volume of the periodical, the date, and the pages covered by the article. Here are specimens of two cards, one containing a note, the other a bibliographical item.

Jefferson a Christian. (To be inserted later.)
Newton, *Forum*, LXXVIII, 893.

In letter, 1816, Jefferson wrote: "I have made a little book, which I call *The Philosophy of Jesus*. It is a paradigm of his doctrines, made by cutting the texts out of the book, in a certain order of time and subject. A more beautiful morsel of ethics I have never seen. It is a document in proof I am a real Christian, that is, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus, very different from the Platonists who call me an infidel and themselves Christians, while they draw all their characteristic dogmas from what its authors never said or saw."

Joseph F. Newton, "Thomas Jefferson and the Religion of America." *Forum*, LXXVII (1927), 890-96.

What should go down in the notes? The purpose of the notes is to take down accurately such pertinent material as one cannot carry in his head. One should not, therefore, take down such obvious or easily remembered statements as those: Jefferson was a liberal; Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence; or, Jefferson was the third president of the United States. No one should need to write these things down. They are either so well known or so general that anyone who writes on the subject should be concerned with the details, not with the broad commonplaces.

Generally speaking, the kinds of material that should be taken down are three:

1. *Specific facts.* These should be entered in condensed form, and for two reasons: to save time, and to save one from unconscious plagiarism by making it less likely that he will reproduce the exact language of his source. For example:

Borrow appointed colporteur Bible Society, first Russia, then Spain. Experiences in Spain basis *Gipsies of Spain* (1840) and *Bible in Spain* (1843).

2. *Anecdotes*. A research article should not merely provide information; it should also make that information vital and picturesque. The note on an illustrative episode should therefore not omit any details that give life, color, humor, or point; and any essential dialog should be taken down verbatim.

Foster, *Atlantic Monthly*, CXXVI, 92.

Dr. Eliot sometimes tells of a pioneer experience in driving from Olympia to Tenino, in western Washington, to visit an Indian reservation. His guide was Hazard Stevens. Before they got into the buggy, he asked Mr. Stevens about the road.

"Oh, it's a good road," answered Mr. Stevens. On their journey they frequently had to lift the wagon out of holes and cut away logs that had fallen across the road. The way was so narrow that, when they met a wagon at one place, they could pass it only by taking their buggy apart, lifting it piece by piece over the wagon, and then putting it together again. When, after various other struggles, they actually reached Tenino, Dr. Eliot said:

"There is one question I would like to ask, Mr. Stevens. What is your definition of a good road?"

"Oh," came the quick reply, "any road you can get through." There you have the spirit of the West. Had men insisted on any other definition of a good road, they would not have crossed the Rockies.

3. *Quotable words or passages*. It is almost impossible to write intelligently on an author without using some of his own words. An essay on Max Beerbohm

or Herman Melville which did not quote him directly would be a *Hamlet* with Hamlet left out. Even when one is not writing about literature, one often comes across a striking phrase apropos of the subject, a phrase which expresses an important idea better than one could express it oneself. Or in an essay on past times the old phraseology brings with it the atmosphere more forcibly than any modern paraphrase. The sentimental English of the Romantic Movement, the sharp and caustic English of the Restoration and Queen Anne, the opulent and sonorous English of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, the seemingly quaint but highly artistic style of Malory and Chaucer—one has to quote them to make the reader taste their flavor and their charm. Finally, one needs to quote verbatim whenever one wishes to give special authority or authenticity to a statement. Has the Pope condemned modernism? Let us have his own words. If Gene Tunney approves of Shakespear, let us have his own words: "While I am not an authority on Shakespear, I do not think there is anyone living who has more appreciation of him than I. I worship at his shrine." Any of these four reasons—to give a correct impression of an author's qualities, to lend beauty or pungency of expression to an idea, to call up a historic atmosphere, to put authority or authenticity behind a statement—justify the copying and use of a quotation. It is such passages which, when well chosen, make for charm or force.

You should continue to read and take notes that will bear out your controlling purpose, till you have enough for your article. If in the course of reading you

discover references to other books or articles better than those you have in your bibliography, add them to your list and read as much as is profitable in them.

OUTLINING

When, or even before, you have finished note-taking, you should begin to plan your article. It is hardly possible for an intelligent person to read intensively on a given theme with a given purpose without finding the material taking on a certain pattern. It may be simply the pattern of growth, or rise and fall, or consecutive steps—all merely chronological arrangements. Or the pattern may be the simple one of division into parts or classes. Or it may be most natural to deal with the origins or causes, then with the situation or fact itself, then with its results. Or there may be a combination of elements. Lowes Dickinson's beautiful chapter on Greek Religion follows this scheme: *

- I. A Definition of Greek Religion.
- II. Its Application to the Powers of Nature
- III. Its Application to Human Society
- IV. The Expression of This Religion in Art and Ritual

Miss Eileen Power's longer chapter on Marco Polo may be analyzed as follows:†

- I. Venice in 1268
- II. Kinsai in 1268

* G. L. Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*. See R. S. Loomis, *Models for Writing Prose*, p. 76.

† E. Power, *Medieval People*. See Loomis and Clark, *Modern English Readings*, revised edition, p. 308.

III. Marco Polo's Attraction to the East

IV. His Adventures in the East

V. His Last Years

VI. His Successors

Every subject suggests its own best analysis; just as every hospital case requires its own diagnosis and treatment.

The first step in the analytical outline is to find the main divisions of the subject as limited by the controlling purpose and to arrange them in a suitable order. Then take each of these divisions, and if it requires extensive treatment, divide it also into subdivisions and arrange them in a suitable order. Be sure that these subdivisions are actually parts or phases of the topic announced in the statement of the main division.

The rules for the construction of an analytical outline are these:

1. All heads and subheads must consist of phrases, not clauses or sentences.

2. Heads and subheads are to be indicated according to rank by Roman numerals, then by capital letters, and if any further subordination is desired, by Arabic numerals and small letters.

3. The relation of subheads to the heads under which they stand must always be that of parts to the whole. In other words, no subhead should treat matter which lies outside the scope of the head.

4. Do not set aside at this stage special heads for introduction and conclusion. These are separate problems.

5. There should not be too many main heads. Usually six would be a maximum number of main heads for a theme of 3000 words; to use more may be a sign of slovenly analysis.

6. The phrases should be clear enough and complete enough to allow the reader to take in not only the meaning of each head and subhead separately, but also the relation between heads and subheads.

7. The heads should follow a reasonable order, and there should be no marked anticlimax, no obvious drop in the interest of the materials at the end.

8. No heads or subheads should overlap. That is, if a point is to be treated under II B, it should not be treated from the same angle under IV C or anywhere else, unless it happens to be included in a summary.

9. All main heads should be coördinate in form. All coördinate subheads under the same head should be coördinate in form. That is, if III A is an adverbial phrase introduced by a preposition, such as "At school," III B and III C must be similar in form; thus:

- A. At school
- B. In college
- C. On his first trip abroad

If IV B 1 is an adjectival phrase, 2, 3, and 4 must also be adjectival phrases; thus:

- 1. Produced entirely at home
- 2. Manufactured entirely abroad

3. Made of imported materials but manufactured at home
4. Made partly of domestic and partly of foreign materials

A full analytical outline of Dickinson's *Greek Religion*, then, would be something like this:

- I. A Definition of Greek Religion
 - A. Definition by Exclusion
 - B. A Superficial Definition
 - C. Definition by Result
- II. The Definition Applied to the Powers of Nature
 - A. External Nature
 1. Odysseus and the Storm
 2. Achilles and the Winds
 - B. Human Nature
- III. The Definition Applied to Society
 - A. The Gods as Founders of Society
 - B. The Gods as Protectors of Society
 - C. Religion as a Promoter of Political Unity
 - D. Religion as a Sanction for All Political Activity
- IV. The Expression of This Religion in Ritual and Art
 - A. Religious Festivals
 - B. The Sculptures of the Panathenæa

EXERCISE

Make an analytical outline of *The Foreign Agitator*, p. 227.

When the analytical outline of your article has been approved or corrected, you should take the slips on which you have set your notes, and fill in the top line of each with an indication of the part of your analytical outline it falls under. If the slip does not belong

under any head, then unless it happens to be useful as introductory or concluding material, it must be left out. Then arrange your slips in the order which the outline calls for.

The next step is to prepare a paragraph outline. This consists of a series of coördinate sentences, stating the subject of each paragraph which is to appear in the finished article. You should calculate first how many paragraphs of average length complete the required number of words, and subtract one, two, or three from the result in order to allow room for the introduction and conclusion. With the remaining number in mind, allot a proper proportion of paragraphs to each of the main heads in the analytical outline. An important main head that would require 1500 words to handle might be allotted eight or ten paragraphs; a very unimportant head might be allotted one paragraph. When each main head has been assigned tentatively its proportionate number of paragraphs, one is ready to begin writing the outline.

This may best be done by conceiving of the whole outline as a paragraph, a coherent résumé of the content of the article. But the sentences, instead of following upon each other's heels as in the normally printed paragraph, stand separately, and are numbered consecutively 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on. The sentences should be coherent so that the reader can follow the train of thought; nevertheless, each should represent the contribution which a single paragraph is to make to the final article. Like a good architect, one must not forget the harmonious design of the whole through too much interest in this or that detail.

A paragraph outline of *Greek Religion*, based on the analytical outline, follows. Compare the two outlines, and then note how the latter is composed of sentences that summarize each paragraph in the article itself, except those quoted and the summary at the end.

1. Greek religion was very different from modern religion.

2. To say that it was a worship of the Olympian gods, is superficial.

3. What did a belief in the gods mean?

4. It meant that man interpreted the forces of Nature as being like himself.

5. The gods, though capricious or hostile, became understandable.

6. Man, by his religion, was made at home in the world.

7. Odysseus, in Homer, is at ease with the elements.

8. In like fashion Achilles regards the winds as persons.

9. Every phenomenon of nature was thus made familiar.

10. Man's own powers and passions became incarnate.

11. Thus both the outer and inner forces that control men were rendered human.

12. The gods also became the founders of society.

13. And they watched over every Greek state.

14. Religion even tended to unify the states in federations.

15. It sanctified all political activities.

16. The expression of Greek religion is to be seen in its festivals.

17. The great festival of the Panathenæa was carved on the Parthenon.

EXERCISE

Make a paragraph outline of *The Foreign Agitator*, p. 227, omitting the introductory and concluding paragraphs.

You have now taken three more essential steps toward the completion of your article: (1) You have gathered in neat and systematic fashion the material called for by your controlling purpose. (2) You have analyzed that material and brought it to order. (3) You have arranged a tentative sequence of paragraph topics. You are now ready to write your first draft.

THE INTRODUCTION

As Robinson sets forth in the passage quoted at the head of this chapter, the new literary ambition is to bring home to the greatest possible number of readers the results of research "in the most pleasing and effective manner." And you who propose to write perhaps on *How Prunes Are Packed* or *Dickens as a Reformer*, may well ask: "How am I going to get anyone to read the results of my researches?" In a college composition course, where the instructor has to read his students' papers willy-nilly, the problem may seem literally academic. Perhaps; but the problem of getting your paper read with pleasure is still very real. The instructor who has to drive through a batch of long articles is likely to prove grateful to any student who makes his path pleasant and entertaining. And when rhetoric courses are left far behind, the student who has been able to catch and keep his jaded instructor's appreciative interest will probably have little difficulty in winning the attention of less hardened mortals. It behooves the student, therefore, to use all his wits to make his instructor "sit up and take notice," not by crude and absurd means, but by the intelligent means

which a trained writer employs. The introduction is the place to do this, and the first sentence is the place to begin.

It is true that some authors practise and some teachers teach the theory that to introduce a subject one should begin by some vague, remote, self-evident truism, such as "Education is one of the most precious ornaments of man or society"; or "People who lived in ancient Egypt were very different from those who live there to-day." The danger of such sentences is that they defeat the very purpose of an introduction: taken in any quantity, they successfully numb any inclination to read more. To parade hackneyed or obvious generalities at the beginning of an article is to run a risk which only great names can afford to take.

One can learn something from the crude practice of advertising writers and after-dinner speakers—men who have to win attention or fail. The advertiser places first his anecdote of Robespierre, and leads from it gradually to his invitation to sign on the dotted line for a set of seven volumes on the French Revolution; or he asks you what you would have done in a certain social situation, and with this entering wedge drives home the suggestion that perhaps you had better possess a copy of *Etiquette for the Enterprising* at \$7.50. The after-dinner orator is not likely to begin with the need of lowering the tariff on woollen goods, but he leads up to it from an anecdote about his own experience with a customs officer. Crude though such efforts often are, they are psychologically sound. Next to being accurate and clear, a writer of exposition

should be interesting. And in the introduction that is his chief business.

The devices to catch interest are numerous and so simple that they hardly need illustration. (1) Narrate an anecdote or incident that is not threadbare with repetition. (2) Connect the subject with the reader's immediate interests. (3) Link it with some recent news item or person in the public eye. (4) Quote from some interesting personality. (5) Make a startling or challenging statement. (6) Ask a question, or present a difficulty that arouses curiosity. (7) Use a brief and vivid bit of description. (8) Indulge a vein of humor—if you have it.

From among these methods you should choose one that most directly and naturally focuses attention on the true subject of the article. An opening paragraph may provoke resentment among intelligent readers if they realize that it has little or nothing to do with the subject, that it is pure bait and nothing more. They will not resent the device, however, if it is a proper introduction to the subject, if the anecdote, humor, or description really has an apt application, if the gateway to the article does not merely attract attention, but is a suitable, direct approach to the main structure.

It is necessary, therefore, not only that the opening should interest, but also that the transition to the topic should be smooth and natural; and that before the introduction is over, whether it be in one, two, or three paragraphs, the topic itself should be clearly indicated. Only when there is good reason for ignoring these practical purposes, when you are assured beforehand of the interest of your readers or when you wish to

take them only by degrees into the heart of your subject, can you afford to neglect these recommendations.

EXERCISE

Which is the better of these two introductions, and why?

William Morris was really a most remarkable person inasmuch as the range and variety of his activities were so great. It would take a book—or perhaps several books—to tell all the interesting things there are to tell about him. So I am going to deal with Morris the craftsman. Little do we realize that when we sit in a nice big easy chair, it is probably a form of the chair which Morris invented and which is called after him the “Morris chair.” We may have walked on carpets copied from those which he designed and manufactured. Our walls, perhaps, are covered with his wall-paper patterns, and, if we are very lucky, we may boast of one of his tapestries.

For more than a hundred and fifty years the American people have spoken with pride and honor of the debt they owe to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton, as the fathers of the American republic, while little or nothing is said of Thomas Paine, a man who rendered inestimable service to this country, and who may rightfully be called the founder and father of American Independence. It is true that Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, but it was Thomas Paine who inspired it, and as the Rev. M. D. Conway says, “The Declaration embodied every principle he [Thomas Paine] had been asserting, and indeed Cobbett is correct in saying that whoever wrote the Declaration, Paine is its author.” The adoption of the Declaration was followed by a war of independence, of which the central figure and leader was Washington. Yet skilful, sagacious, and brave as he was, he could not keep despair from the hearts of the people in the darkest days of the war. Thomas Paine composed the pamphlet which fired the people with courage till the war

was won. After the war, the need for a constitution to govern the independent colonies arose. It is Alexander Hamilton who is credited with launching the idea of an adequate constitution. Yet four years earlier, Paine had devoted a paragraph in his *Common Sense* to the need for a convention to frame a "Continental Charter of the United Colonies." With justice, then, the English writer Cobbett declares, "I saw Paine first pointing the way and then leading a nation through perils of all sorts to independence and to lasting liberty, prosperity, and greatness."

LITERARY MANNERS

Before dealing with the body of the article, the student would do well to go over again the instructions regarding literary honesty in the first and third chapters of this book. Professor Baldwin put the matter of acknowledgment excellently:

Facts are not copyrighted; but unless a writer is accepted as himself an authority, he is expected to tell where he found them. Form, that is order, grouping, is private property, copyrighted, not to be reproduced without paying royalty, not worth reproducing anyway, since the whole point of writing at all is thereby lost. Phrase is as strictly private as its maker's purse. It may, of course, be quoted, with citation as of fact; but frequent quotation is tiresome and unprofitable. Use without quotations is theft.

To these general rules exception is made when the facts are generally known or the phrase is easily recognized by a well-read person as a quotation. But apart from such exceptions, it is a matter of literary etiquette, even of personal honor, to give credit where credit is due: to use no individual phrase, no complete clause or sentence taken verbatim from a written or

printed source without quotation marks and at least an indication of its author.

COHERENCE IN THE ARTICLE

Now that the reader's interest is aroused and the subject itself is announced, it remains to develop it according to the paragraph outline. This outline, provided it is a good one, should prevent any wandering away from the topic and any violation of the principle of unity. But a good outline does not insure a coherent article. For coherence, as we know, means making clear the connection between the parts, and it is easy to leave out the connections. Just as coherence within the paragraph means that each sentence should relate easily to the preceding sentence, so coherence in the article means that each paragraph should naturally fit on to the preceding paragraph, and that each new main division of the subject should be clearly introduced as such. The reader should be made aware that he has entered upon a new phase of the subject, and any relationship that this phase bears to the preceding should be expressed.

Coherence as applied to the article, then, is a matter of watching the beginnings of paragraphs and of larger divisions of thought.

Since the possible relationships between ideas are so many and varied, no fixed rules for their expression are possible. The best way to learn the practice of coherence on a large scale is to take an essay of Macaulay's or Thoreau's or any good exposition from a book of selections, read the paragraphs in pairs, see

what the thought connection is, and then note how it has been expressed in the transition. One word may do the trick: *consequently, nevertheless, furthermore, thus, next, third, earlier, superior, drawback, motive, result*. Or several sentences may be required to get from the idea left behind to the heart of the idea to come.

For example, a paragraph of Miss Power's chapter on *Marco Polo* deals with the last years of the adventurer's life and concludes with his death. The next begins:

A characteristic story of his death-bed is related by a Dominican friar. . . . "What he told in the book," says Jacopo, "was not as much as he had really seen, because of the tongues of detractors. . . . And because there are many great and strange things in that book, which are reckoned past all credence, he was asked by his friends on his death-bed to correct the book, by removing everything that went beyond the facts. To which his reply was that he had not told one-half of what he had really seen." How well one can see that last indignant flash of the dying observer, who in the long years of his youth had taken notes of strange tribes and customs for the wise and gracious Kublai Khan, and whom little men now dared to doubt. Indeed, modern discovery has entirely confirmed the exactitude of Marco Polo's observation. . . .*

It is not till this last sentence that we arrive at the central thought of the new paragraph: Polo's veracity. The rest of the paragraph shows how that veracity has been confirmed by modern exploration in Central Asia. The author's problem was to pass from Polo's

* From E. Power, *Medieval People*. Houghton Mifflin Company. See Loomis and Clark, *Modern English Readings*.

death to his trustworthiness. How neatly the transition is made, from the statement that Polo died, through the anecdote of his death-bed assertion of his veracity, to its vindication in our own time.

But most transitions are shorter and require less ingenuity. The essential point is this: if there is a relation between paragraphs or between larger divisions of the article, express it; if not, be sure your reader knows that a new topic is begun.

EXERCISE

1. Study the transitions in three long expository articles. Take a series of four paragraphs from each of these articles, and copy out the transitional material, the topic sentence, and the last sentence from each paragraph.

2. Do the same with any logically developed, long exposition in a standard collection.

EMPHASIS

Emphasis is a matter which should take care of itself. For if you really have a controlling purpose, some thought that dominates you and your outline, some idea that you want to bring home to your readers, you will not have to be told to hammer it in. Is it necessary to tell the coach who addresses a college meeting on the eve of the big game that he must not become so interested in the details of past baseball history that he forgets to urge every man to get out and "yell" himself hoarse for the team and for good old Alma Mater?

Emphasis simply means remembering what you really want to say, and stressing it. On the negative

side, it means not getting so lost in the details that your reader cannot see the wood for the trees, and not trailing off into matters of no moment. On the positive side, it means enforcing your point so far as seems necessary by striking diction, artistic repetition, and a strong conclusion.

Let me repeat what has already been said in connection with the simple exposition, that a separate concluding paragraph is not always necessary. Often an article naturally winds up with the last paragraph called for by the paragraph outline, and in that case there is no reason in the world for you to add anything more for the mere sake of concluding. If, however, you still have something on your mind, if you feel your point has not been made fully and forcibly, run over in your head such ways as you can imagine for a vigorous, picturesque, or authoritative way of presenting your thought; choose one; work it out simply but carefully. On no account be content with a mere feeble summary. It is a frank confession that you have no imagination, no verbal resources, not even the wit to note down some incident or saying that has the heart of the matter in it. The conclusion, when one is called for, is a measure of your ability to realize a dramatic finale and to play up to it.

THE FINAL DRAFT AND THE FOOTNOTES

When the composition of the article is finished, you should read it carefully through to see that it is thoroughly clear, that nothing is introduced too abruptly, that there are no ambiguous phrases or obscure con-

structions, that every sentence flows smoothly into the next, and that each paragraph links itself to its successor.

Now for the final draft. This should offer no difficulties apart from the difficulty which some of us have in spelling and punctuating accurately and the difficulty of putting in the references in the footnotes. It is well to arrange in their order all cards or slips which have supplied material for the article. Then while copying, observe the number of notes you have used on the page, and allow the proper amount of space at the bottom for footnote references. There should be references for all such materials as the following:

1. Quotations, except quotations from the Bible, Shakespear, the Declaration of Independence, Lincoln's *Gettysburg Oration*, and any other passage or phrase familiar to cultured Americans.

2. Specific facts that are not generally known.

3. Broad statements that are likely to provoke question.

When a single paragraph contains a number of statements all based on one or two pages in the same book, then they may be covered by one footnote placed at the end and stating that the material of the paragraph is derived from a certain source.

Strict attention must be paid to the form and punctuation of the footnote.

1. A symbol, usually a small numeral, is placed at the end of each passage in the body of the article to which there is reference below. This same symbol begins the corresponding footnote.

2. A footnote reference to a book should contain the author's last name, not too long a title, the volume, and page or pages, in some such form as this:

³ Kent, *Introduction to Thermodynamics*, II, 37.

A reference to a magazine article should contain the author's last name (unless it has been mentioned at this point in the text), the title of the periodical, the volume, and the page or pages. Thus:

⁶ Wolff, in *Independent*, XLIII, 98-101.

Sometimes instead of the volume and page, the full date and page are desirable. This, of course, is true of citations from the newspapers.

3. If two or more consecutive notes refer to the same source, it is not necessary to repeat name, title, and volume after the first citation, but one may use the abbreviation *Ibid.*, meaning "In the same place." Thus:

⁸ *Ibid.*, 68-71.

4. If only one work of an author is cited and it is cited more than once, it is unnecessary to repeat the title after the author's name, but instead one may use the abbreviation *op. cit.*, meaning "the work already cited." Thus:

² Grandgent, *op. cit.*, 99.

After the copy has been made and the footnotes inserted, you should go over the manuscript, carefully watching for slips in spelling and punctuation, making sure that every quoted phrase and passage is placed in quotation marks, and verifying the references in

your footnotes to see that names, titles, and page numbers are given accurately.

There remains now only the bibliography. Copy out according to some systematic scheme, preferably an alphabetical arrangement based on the authors' last names, the items in your tentative bibliography of which you have made actual use. Be sure that names and titles are complete, and that the dates are given.

Your opus is now complete; your house is built from foundation to garret, from the plumbing to the paintings on the wall. If the work has been done with the artistry of a good architect and the conscience of an honest contractor, you may be proud of your work.

MODEL RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE FOREIGN AGITATOR

AN OLD AMERICAN INSTITUTION *

by Sylvia Kopald Selekmán

Those Americans who, like Mr. Will Rogers, only know what they read in the papers, will have realized now that the upheavals in San Francisco last summer were the work of foreign agitators. They are learning that the troubles in Minneapolis, the Imperial Valley, Chicago, Portland or wherever else they may appear also are communist-inspired. Further testimony was offered in the textile strike when Governor Green of Rhode Island warned the General Assembly on September 13 that Rhode Island, like San Francisco, faced a "Communist uprising," while New England newspapers suggestively pointed out how much of the recent

* From *The New Republic*, March 27, 1935.

violent disorders here as elsewhere "may be properly ascribed to the activity of deportable aliens."¹

Some of us may have expected a little more originality by 1935. But apparently our industrial Jack Horners everywhere find that the familiar tactics still yield plums greatly to their liking: You sit tight in your comfortable corner confronting a strike, you put in your thumb, pull out a foreign agitator, and say, "What a good American boy am I!" Then you mobilize vigilantes, Legionnaires, policemen and other custodians of property rights, in the name of which you smash printing presses, offices, halls, homes and heads. Finally you bring the issue into politics, elect several true-blue conservatives with the help of several good red (perish the color) herrings, and think complacently of the Revolutionary Fathers.

Vigilantes, of course, do not read history, or even they might be given pause to realize how ancient a dodge it really is. More than a century ago, their forbears rushed to defend America against the foreign menaces hidden in demands for a ten-hour day and free public schools; and invariably after (and before) they have maintained similar guard against such threats to our treasured traditions. In April, 1825, the Boston carpenters struck for a ten-hour day. The United States of America then was not quite thirty-seven years old. There had been little immigration since the mid-eighteenth century. The families of these immigrants had now been in America for nearly a century. However, none of these facts prevented employers from quickly scenting the foreign threat to American traditions when their workers first asked for a ten-hour day.

The twelve to fifteen-hour day, let it be admitted, still was in the then existing American tradition. Emerging industry simply took over the working day of the prevailing agricultural life. Men worked from sunrise to sunset and the industrious habits of the sun-to-sun day on their farms and in their homes had been invested by Puritan America "with

¹ The *Boston Transcript*, September 14, 1934, p. 1.

the sacred character of a moral, if not a religious, precept.”² Therefore when the workers began to protest the effects of this fixed custom in wage labor they spoke a new language. As citizens of a democracy, they demanded leisure for the self-training and education that would help them perform intelligently the duties of their citizenship. As wage workers, they found that the sun-to-sun system entailed an insecure, irregular life. For employers, paying wages by the day, naturally sought to concentrate work as far as possible in the long days of late spring, summer and early fall, when they could require their men to work from twelve to fifteen hours. This meant both intense physical strain during the summer and widespread unemployment in the winter. Accordingly, when their employers refused to agree with the Boston carpenters “that ten hours’ faithful labor shall hereafter constitute a day’s work,”³ they precipitated what Mr. David J. Saposs calls “one of the most notable strikes in American labor history.”⁴

Like our contemporary opponents of workers’ rights, those early employers stood aghast before the proposed “departure from the salutary and steady usages which have prevailed in this city, and all New England, from time immemorial.”⁵ They shuddered over the potential demoralization threatening the workers in the leisure that would be left them after working from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., with time out for meals—the doors thus opened wide to “idleness and vice,” the “degraded state” that would replace the happiness and prosperity yielded “the Mechanical Classes by frugal, orderly, temperate and ancient habits.”⁶ They worried over the “unhappy influence” of the proposed reform upon the young apprentices and child laborers “by seducing them from that course of industry and economy of time” to which

² Commons and Associates, *History of Labor*, Vol. I, p. 174.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁵ *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, Vol. VI, pp. 79-81.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81.

they, their employers, were anxious to "enure them." ⁷ All in all, as they contemplated the "unnatural production," they could not believe "this project to have originated with any of the faithful and industrious Sons of New England, but are compelled to consider it an evil of foreign growth." ⁸

Again when various factors after 1825 led the American workers of the day to try political action to win improvements in their conditions, politicians, newspaper editors and industrialists saw once more foreign agitators gestating crimes that make even the best horrors of our modern Red Scares seem mere gentle lapses. The movement for universal white male suffrage was fast gaining headway, and in state after state the removal of property and other qualifications upon the right to vote and hold office was admitting the workers to the electorate.

Leaders of the existing political parties were not slow in seeking to win the enfranchised workers for their own purposes. But they were not the only ones who recognized what a valuable acquisition the workers would make to any cause that could win their political allegiance. Reformers and radicals like George Henry Evans, Frances Wright and Robert Dale Owen also wooed them. Evans and Owen had been born in England, Frances Wright in Scotland. Evans was an early formulator of that American agrarianism which eventually created the Homestead Act in 1862; Frances Wright, disciple of the French Revolution, was an advocate of Negro freedom, women's rights, experimental community associations, rationalism and numerous other radicalisms of the day; Robert Dale Owen, son of his father in many ways, added to Owenism a convinced faith in universal education through free public schools under a "state guardianship" that would provide children with food, clothing and a rounded manual-cultural training. Thus they were both foreign and radical, these agitators, as are some of our contemporary ones today; and though the workingmen's parties time and again publicly denounced their doctrines,

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 77.

⁸ Commons and Associates, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 160.

labor's indigenous programs became "agrarianism," "infidelism," "communism," etc., etc.

And what were the official demands of these early workingmen's parties behind which their opponents saw lurking such foreign menaces? They were fighting for free public schools, abolition of imprisonment for debts, equality of rich and poor before the law, abolition of "the compulsory militia system which penalized the rich for non-attendance with a fine and the poor with imprisonment,"⁹ equal taxation, the reform of a banking system that was permitting wage payment in banknotes of doubtful value, and numerous other social reforms that, like the short work day, have by now become proudly accepted "American tradition" since they found their first advocates in this early labor movement.

For all the abuse they were receiving from the self-appointed guardians against foreign agitation, the workers themselves saw their programs entirely in terms of the Americanism of the Declaration of Independence. They framed their propaganda in the language of democracy, equality and freedom. "The objects we have in view," said one group of them, "are hallowed by the sympathy of patriotism—it is the finish of the glorious work of the Revolution."¹⁰ They asked factory legislation to secure to the worker "his right to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' on a par with his rich fellow citizen."¹¹ They sought free public schools—"A REPUBLICAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION which shall afford the poorest man's child . . . equal means of instruction with the child of the richest," because "real liberty and equality have no foundation but in universal and equal instruction."¹² In fact they generally made education their central demand—"the first and most important . . . object for which we are contending" because "This is the rock on which the Temple of moral freedom and independence is founded; any other foundation

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 223, 224.

than this, will prove inadequate to the protection of our liberties, and our republican institutions.”¹³

But the defenders of the status quo in the early nineteenth century knew better. As they contemplated these startling programs, they accused the workers repeatedly of advocating “agrarianism and infidelity,” of “aiming at an agrarian law for the equal distribution of property and with being leagued with foreigners to overthrow religion and the existing system of government, and a number of other equally absurd projects.”¹⁴ They denounced the demand for universal education as “incompatible with the very organization and being of civil society, as a ‘dream’ not only foreign but ancient in origin—an attempt to revive ‘institutions or habits like those of Sparta . . . (embracing even) grand *Republican* female academies, to make *Roman* matrons.’ ”¹⁵ They saw that “the scheme of universal Equal Education at the expense of the state . . . would be a compulsory application of the means of the richer, for the direct use of the poorer classes; and so for *an arbitrary division of property among them*.”¹⁶ On the floor of the New York Assembly the Workingmen’s Party was denounced by a nineteenth-century Senator Lusk as “factionists, more dangerous than any . . . in the days of the French Revolution.”¹⁷ When finally the Workingmen’s Party in New York suffered a decisive defeat in 1830, that stalwart defender of American tradition, Tammany Hall, gave first voice to the since popular battle cry of sending uncomfortable ideas “back where they came from.” It rejoiced that “agrarianism in New York is dead, gone, buried and transported back to England where it originated.”¹⁸

And if in coming months the workers of our own day find themselves, as they attempt to actualize Section 7a, damned by the “bad names” of communists, foreign agitators, at-

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

tackers of American prosperity and American ideals, let them take heart by remembering how a New York newspaper in 1829 pictured the working-class proponents of free public schools and other American institutions now long accepted: These "poor and deluded followers of a crazy atheistical woman" (*i.e.*, Frances Wright) it called them, "lost to society, to earth and to heaven, godless and hopeless, clothed and fed by stealing and blasphemy . . . such are the apostles who are trying to induce a number of able-bodied men in this city to follow in their own course . . . to disturb the peace of the community for a time . . . betake themselves to incest, robbery and murder; die like ravenous beasts, hunted down without pity; and go to render their account before God, whose existence they believed in their miserable hearts, even while they were blaspheming Him in their ignorant, sniveling and puerile speculations."¹⁹

Thus, at the very dawn of modern wage labor in America was elaborated the pattern of the "alien agitators," those straw men at which employers have ever since been tilting to beat back their workers' struggle for improved conditions. Great strike movements, essays into labor or radical politics, unrest generated by depression or war, persistent efforts to achieve labor organizations, all have seen the foreign radical trotted out by the strategists of standpat. In fact, the rapid development of our industrial life enabled them to wring remarkably varied uses out of the "foreigner." For, with this as with so much else, they discovered how to have their cake and eat it too. As early as 1832, workers were protesting the deliberate importation of cheap labor by employers;²⁰ as time went on the alien contract laborer became a familiar competitor and a familiar strike-breaker too. With that the design was complete: the employers had obtained in the foreigners they themselves so often brought in cheap labor costs, strike-breakers, smoke-screens, and scapegoats.

American industrial history, accordingly, echoes continu-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 272-273.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

ously the changes rung upon the theme—in the press, in the employers' organizations, in the vigilante corps, even in the courts. When neither the defeat of the ten-hour strike nor of the workingmen's parties during the twenties convinced labor that their group efforts were un-American, during the thirties their employers sought the aid of the courts to persuade them. Judge Edwards did his best in the famous case of the New York tailors, when he proclaimed trade unions not only injurious to industry and the workers themselves, but also "in this favored land of law and liberty" of foreign origin and "mainly upheld by foreigners."²¹ If the unionists were not convinced, neither were the employers deterred. They continued to bring in large numbers of common laborers, especially from Ireland, to work on the canals, docks and railroads. In time, these workers struck, and sometimes even rioted, against the low wages and terrible living conditions they confronted. Then leading papers like *The New York Journal of Commerce* gravely halted their proof that trade unions "were unnecessary in this country . . . and were made up of foreigners,"²² long enough to tell the heirs of the Boston Tea Party, Shays' Rebellion, the Whiskey Insurrection, and Fries' Revolt that riots "are an exotic" phenomenon in America, "which has been imported along with the dregs and scum of the old world that we so much covet."²³ And with this they planted that ever since rooted American conviction that violence in industrial disputes, when employed by the workers, is a foreign product. The hard times and humanitarian movements of the forties naturally furnished texts for many a frightened sermon on the infidelity, free love, and anarchy threatened by the phalanxes and communes, the banks of exchange and the associations borrowed from the theorists of Germany, France, and Britain. During the fifties, with their continuing large-scale immigration, the terrified nativists organized to "preserve

²¹ *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, Vol. IV, pp. 325-332.

²² Commons and Associates, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 410.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 412.

America for Americans," and from pulpit, press, and political platform, patriots were rallied against "the dark designs of the revolutionaries who were streaming to our soil intent on overturning our government and our cherished institutions." ²⁴

The anti-slavery agitation and the Civil War seemed to crowd the foreign agitator off the stage for a time, but it was not long before he reappeared in his familiar role. If the employers took up once more their subsidizing of immigration during the sixties, if they sought cheap labor and strike-breakers abroad "for business as usual," if they exempted recent immigrants from the blacklists they circulated among their fellows, and even wrote the alien contract into federal law, they did not fail to recognize the great unemployed riots that startled the country in 1873 as the handiwork of those now historic foreign agitators. As labor gained strength, and the pressure on its standards of living grew with the rapid disappearance of the frontier and the tremendous industrialization of the time, the unrest of the eighties produced profound upheaval. Then not only the eight-hour strikes were finally routed at Haymarket Square in 1886; the entire labor movement suffered a severe setback. No one ever knew who threw the bomb that fateful fourth of May; but even a less volatile people than the Americans would have been reduced to panic by the hysteria with which court, press and guardians of the peace dilated on the fact that seven of the eight anarchists arrested were aliens—the foreign agitator at his starkest! Nor did it help the workers to turn to politics even behind a leader so peculiarly American in origin and thought as Henry George. Newspapers and politicians steadfastly portrayed the issue as a conflict between American and foreign ideas.

Thus the turn of the century found the foreign agitator himself a securely established American institution. The rise of the I. W. W. offered golden opportunities to invoke him, and the terrifying image of the torch-brandishing alien

²⁴ Carman, *Social and Economic History*, Vol. II, pp. 55-56.

glowered forth upon the country from Lawrence, Paterson, Passaic, the Mesaba Range, McKees Rocks, and numerous other arenas of conflict. The Great War furnished a new refinement on the old tradition, as the Russian Bolsheviks became for our Tories of the early twentieth century what the French Jacobins had been for their forbears of the early nineteenth. Judge Gary accordingly could strike chords from an instrument made in America when he affirmed to Senator Kenyon his conviction "that this foreign element," these "outside agitators" precipitated the steel strike of 1919.²⁵ And if at the same hearings Senator Smith and Lieutenant Van Buren combined to draw the moral, they were distilling not only the results of the Lieutenant's Red investigations in Indiana, but the tactical wisdom of a century. Said Senator Smith (of Georgia): "If we shipped all the alien agitators and organizers out of the country—," interposed Lieutenant Van Buren, "there would be no more trouble at all."²⁶ Presumably that is why, when trouble accumulated once more out of our current depression, San Francisco wired Secretary of Labor Perkins to invoke the deportation law.

The employers, then, in our present-day America, where mass immigration has ended, will apparently be no more "stumped" than were those of 1825 in an America where mass immigration had hardly begun. But from that fact we can take heart, too. For if the foreign agitator proves too valuable a weapon for the stand-patters of mature American industry to relinquish in their defense of "American tradition," it is encouraging to remember that all the foreign agitators whom employers could raise in dawning and developing American industry did not assure their final victory over such "revolutionary, un-American" demands as the ten-hour day, the eight-hour day, factory legislation, better wages and free public schools. History may repeat itself on both sides of the continuing battle.

²⁵ Quoted by Baker, *The New Industrial Unrest*, pp. 40-41.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE INFORMAL ESSAY

THE types of writing we have discussed so far have had one main purpose: to make the reader understand. If they interested as well by means of anecdote, live illustration, and humor, or if they charmed by an accurate, picturesque, or rhythmical style, so much the better; these qualities add immensely to the pleasure of the reader. But a definition of *sabotage*, an exposition of Courtly Love, an article on Vitamines and Their Ways is a failure if it does not impart serious information and understanding. Not so the informal essay. Understanding, even illumination, may be its effect, but it need add nothing to the sum of one's knowledge or insight. Its motive may be serious, but its manner must not be didactic or prosy or pompous, and information is the least of its concerns. The essay—and by this word we mean the informal essay—exists to delight.

THE QUALITIES OF THE ESSAY

1. *Gusto*

But before one can delight others one must first have experienced some pleasurable sensations oneself. The encyclopedia article on jazz will impartially dis-

cuss, with scientific accuracy, the origin of this music, its relation to the music of the past, and other such informing topics. There is no throb, no heartbeat, no delight in it. But the lad who awakes after the Prom and remembers how divinely she danced to the jazz, or the girl who "just adores" the long sliding chromatics, will hardly show aloofness. Their writing, if they can express themselves at all, will be more like an informal essay. The essayist must revel in his subject. Even if he hates, he must hate with gusto; even if he loathes, he must roll his loathing upon his tongue. If a dancer is merely bored with the conversation of her partners, she will never write an essay on it; but if she scorns the sweet nothings uttered in her ear, she may write a sparkling essay on *One-Step Conversation*. To be intensely alive to the comedy and romance of life is the first qualification of an essayist.

2. Originality

When this ability to enjoy becomes intense, the writer is likely to achieve the second quality of the essayist, originality. For intense feeling provokes thought, and often new ideas and new expressions. Cranks, and even freaks, are better essayists than Babbitts. Like inventors, they see in the subject what no one else has seen. Placid, unruffled, unobserving persons will see in a Commencement only the conventional and external side—the procession, the speeches, the band, the degrees—and will render the simple verdict: "A good time was had by all." But who cares for these commonplaces? A canny observer, however, who sees

pathos in a Commencement dress, finds a thrill in the music, detects egotism in a voice, and banality in what it says, and who is suddenly smitten with the resemblance of the whole performance to some childhood game, may achieve a charming essay. A good essayist does not merely stare at a subject like a cow across a fence, but snaps it up as eagerly as a flycatcher engulfs a bug. He relishes it and wrings meaning from it. To write an essay, add to one full cup of enjoyment three dashes of piquant thought.

An original essay flows almost inevitably from a subject viewed from an unusual angle. Consider, for example, the quarter-mile race as a study in facial expression; the moving picture "palace" as a realization or a mockery of the fairy palaces of our childhood dreams; seeing people off on trains as a study of the inane remarks we shout through the window at the bobbing and grinning travelers; feminism from the angle of the pugnacity a timid little woman develops when an idea dominates her; machinery as it affects Bill, who, almost too tired to yawn, snaps into life when he sees an automobile engine, and then coddles it, croons over it, takes it apart and reassembles it, and is much refreshed by his labor; examinations as incentives to originality when the student knows nothing about the answers; the radio as a means of enabling a human being to do three things at once—read, smoke, and listen to a concert. Any subject will do for an essay provided it stimulates the cerebrum to personal, fresh, piquant thought. Whether the subject is as banal as bobbed hair or racketeers, if it is

viewed from some unusual angle, originality is almost inevitable.

There must, however, be no absurd straining after effect. If the Commencement ceremony is like no childhood game you ever played, do not pretend it is. If the conversational clichés of the dance have never moved you to reflection and amusement in the past, and do not spontaneously provoke comment now, it might be well not to drive your brain to the effort. Attempts to be sparkling, when there has never been any sparkle in the subject for you and when you can see none now, are bound to be calamitous. But when the subject fascinates with its novel facets and sets your brain a-tingle, then know that you have something personal and real to express. You have achieved genuine originality.

3. Informality

A third quality of the informal essay is to be found in the word "informal." One may be serious but not solemn. Pomposity is taboo; stilts exist only to be broken. Of course, the writing of a history, a textbook, or a study of religion is serious business, and the writer must keep his gravity. A sermon on hell fire had to be solemn: only a few fleeting years at most stood between the unregenerate and the dread scorching. But an essay on trying to keep warm in a winter sleeping car may make even personal ignition seem welcome, especially to one who has just been blandly assured that "dere ain't no mo' blankets." In an essay you may even argue for what you disbelieve and what is at first glance absurd. Though you defend murder, the reader

is quickly in on the secret and his eye lights up for joy. The essayist is always urbane; he does not browbeat his readers like a writer for a "cause." He will not argue pugnaciously for peace, for court reform, for fascism. If he chooses one of these subjects, he will try to shake the reader out of his grimness into ease and plasticity. And he may well write of the joy of evading work, of lying in the sun, of "playing hookey," of cutting-in at a dance, of sweetly sleeping after the alarm clock has buzzed into his ear.

4. *Incompleteness*

Another quality of the essay is to be discovered in the word itself. It is a modest word and means simply an "attempt." No need, then, to be exhaustive. The informal essay is not to be written by the grim, earnest soul to whom nothing matters but his nose in a book—very likely it's *her* nose. Such a person, seriously considering the subject, cannot stop until every fact is rounded up and herded into the fold, and the gate is locked. Such a writer should turn to the treatise or the report; let him write an account of the Federal Reserve System and ease his conscientious soul. In such writing completeness is necessary; without it the article would be about as useful as a one-legged horse. But vacations spent on an uncle's farm—who cares for completeness here? This is no sociological document but a reminiscence of joy in human nature or wild nature, suggestive rather than complete. It merely hopes that at the close the reader will happily say, "Yes, I remember . . ." or "I wish I had . . ." Like

a humming bird the essayist refuses to make a complete census of the garden but chooses what flowers he will. One thing he must remember: at the end the reader must be satisfied, not irritated because the treatment has been scanty. Otherwise the writer may stop when he will.

5. *Free Structure*

Freed from the obligation to solemnity and completeness, the essayist is also, in the fifth place, not in bondage to strict logic. His writing will be as genial as good talk round the fire, perhaps beginning in whim, possibly straying from the immediate point, ending where no one dreamed, but making its point with delightful flavor all the way. A treatise on haying must follow some logical scheme of discussion; but an essay on the delights of haying is of a different tribe. You may recall the taste of root beer ice-cold from hanging down in the well; you may insert scraps of conversation from the haymow, or describe the eccentricities of an old farm hand. You will leave your readers thinking that here is one more delightful experience for human beings to enjoy—at least, by proxy.

But however casually you may seem to follow your fancy, however far you may seem to have strayed from your point, it is well to keep within the spacious bounds of a dominant mood or effect, and to come back to your point in the end. Even Lamb, the most discursive of essayists, usually has a main theme, and when he wanders from the topic, as in *Old China*, to speak of matters as irrelevant as old books and cheap seats in the theaters, he nevertheless returns, abruptly but

naturally, in the last sentence to the subject of Old China with which he had begun. The organization of the essay may be loose and illogical as you please, but there must be a fundamental unity of tone, an essential sanity after all.

6. *Genial Egotism*

In the sixth place, the essayist may say "I like," or "I don't like," or "It seems to me," or any other expression that reveals directly his own personal views. He is not trying to settle eternal principles but to record how the world of men and things has affected a personality. He does not try to make converts. If he writes, "I never tire of watermelon," he has no design to lure the reader from peaches and cream. A historian who allowed his treatment of the relations between England and America during the Civil War to be colored by the fact that once, when he slipped on the ice, an Englishman laughed at him, would be a bad historian. But an essayist may unblushingly admit that, despite the manifold virtues of grapefruit, he has always detested it since the florid gentleman in the dining car squirted juice into the writer's eye. He is neither making a plea for the ostracism of grapefruit nor showing conceit. We are all interested in the likes and dislikes of our fellows. If the essayist happens to have a marked dislike for yellow houses, or for Maltese cats, or a strong loyalty to aromatic vegetables like onions, turnips, and cabbage, he is at liberty to write of these preferences and distastes so long as he makes his essay interesting.

7. Humor

Humor is not an essential quality of the essay, but if the author has an eye that lights up at the little incongruities of life, at its freakish discrepancies, his essay has better chances of success. This is especially true if the author can laugh at the world and love it none the less, at his friends and still cherish them, at himself and not lose his self-respect. Few informal essays set us to roaring with laughter; most of them make us smile. Here is an essay that pokes fun at men because they seem always able to answer any questions that women may ask. The author calls men "the answering sex." Even a man will smile as he reads because of the humor behind the barbs that fly at him. Another essay develops the way in which hostesses manage conversation, their feverish desire to have talk, talk, talk, whether one subject is finished before another is begun or not, so long as something is always being said and no arid stretches appear. Even a habitual hostess may well smile as she reads. Without the presence of humor these essays would be stupid, perhaps exasperating. The reader thanks whatever gods there are for the invitation to smile.

STYLE

In hardly any other kind of writing is the presence of a style to heighten the reader's enjoyment so essential as in the essay. If you are dealing with trifles, you must deal with them delightfully; if you expect people to be interested in your personal feelings and fancies,

you must express them with charm. Here, if ever, the rich word-hoard, the picked word, the neatly polished phrase, the balanced clauses, the apt illustration, the pungent epigram count, and count heavily. Do not pretend to arts and graces that you do not possess; but call what you have into play. Return the far-fetched simile to its home; suppress the desire to use some "marvelous word" until you are sure what it means. But use as much care on the manner as on the matter of your writing; for the meal you are serving must recommend itself, not so much for its calories and proteins, as for its flavor.

Chesterton, in the following paragraph, invests his romantic and solemn theme with the flavor of the romantic and the solemn by his choice of words and the flow of his sentences.

There are two equal and eternal ways of looking at this twilight world of ours: we may see it as the twilight of evening or the twilight of morning; we may think of anything, down to a fallen acorn, as a descendant or as an ancestor. There are times when we are almost crushed, not so much with the load of the evil as with the load of the goodness of humanity, when we feel that we are nothing but the inheritors of a humiliating splendour. But there are other times when everything seems primitive, when the ancient stars are only sparks blown from a boy's bonfire, when the whole earth seems so young and experimental that even the white hair of the aged, in the fine biblical phrase, is like almond-trees that blossom, like the white hawthorn grown in May. That it is good for a man to realize that he is "the heir of all the ages" is pretty commonly admitted; it is a less popular but equally important point that it is good for him sometimes to realize that he is not only an ancestor, but an ancestor to primal antiquity; it is good for him to

wonder whether he is not a hero, and to experience ennobling doubts as to whether he is not a solar myth.*

To turn from that paragraph to the following by Belloc is to see how different the atmosphere of a bit of writing can be made by different treatment. We can set down, baldly, any idea, and the reader can "get it," but what we wish to do is to make him feel it as well. So here we have the swing and the courage and the keen love of fight that Belloc celebrates:

I love to think of those Norwegian men who set out eagerly before the north-east wind when it came down from their mountains in the month of March like a god of great stature to impel them to the West. They pushed their Long Keels out upon the rollers, grinding the shingle of the beach at the fjord-head. They ran down the calm narrows, they breasted and they met the open sea. Then for days and days they drove under this master of theirs and high friend, having the wind for a sort of captain, and looking always out to the sea line to find what they could find. It was the spring-time; and men feel the spring upon the sea even more surely than they feel it upon the land. They were men whose eyes, pale with the foam, watched for a landfall, that unmistakable good sight which the wind brings to us, the cloud that does not change and that comes after the long emptiness of sea days like a vision after the sameness of our common lives. To them the land they so discovered was wholly new.†

Style is something to "mull over." By seeking, rejecting, seeking once more till one finds the full, rich, savorsome expression of his thought, one attains style. We can see in the exercise below that even Lamb, the master of the informal essay, did not, when he wrote offhand to a friend, strike out his ideas and phrases in

* From G. K. Chesterton. By permission of Dodd, Mead & Company.

† From H. Belloc, *First and Last*. E. P. Dutton & Company.

their perfection. By comparing a letter devoted to the topic of roast pig with the famous *Dissertation* on the same theme, we can see to what good purpose Lamb "mulled over" his first effort. He uses his first inspirations without much change when they satisfy him; but he discards phrases and whole sentences, and adds liberally fresh inventions, new turns of thought and varied phrasings, until he has given fully of the best, and only the best, that is in him. What the great master did, the neophyte may not disdain. Live with your essays; brood over them; read other essays that will raise your standards and communicate charm of manner. The style of a good essay is like the savory dishes of a famous cook; she flavors, and tastes, and re-flavors till she has hit just the right nuance that commends them to our palates.

EXERCISE

In parallel columns below are certain passages from a letter from Charles Lamb to Coleridge and the corresponding passages from Lamb's *Dissertation upon Roast Pig*. Point out the differences, and explain as far as you can the reason for the changes:

LAMB'S LETTER

What a pity such buds should blow out into the rank maturity of bacon!

LAMB'S ESSAY

See him in his dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth! Wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obsti-

LAMB'S LETTER (*Cont'd*)

To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things which I could never think of sending away. Teal, widgeon, snipes, barndoor fowls, ducks, geese—your tame villatic things—Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as to myself. They are but self-extended; but pardon me if I stop somewhere. Where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than

LAMB'S ESSAY (*Cont'd*)

nate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
Death came with timely care.

His memory is odoriferous; no clown curseth while his stomach half rejecteth the rank bacon; no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages. He hath a fair sepulchre in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure—and for such a tomb might be content to die.

I am one of those who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those "tame villatic fowl"), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to

LAMB'S LETTER (*Cont'd*)

the sensual rarity, there my friends (or any good man) may command me; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay, I should think it an affront, an undervaluing done to Nature, who bestowed such a boon upon me, if in a churlish mood I parted with the precious gift.

One of the bitterest pangs of remorse I ever felt was when a child—when my kind old aunt had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plum-cake upon me. In my way home through the Borough I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant, but thereabouts; a look-beggar, not a verbal petitioner; and in the coxcombry of taught charity I gave away the cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an Evangelical peacock, when of a sudden my old aunt's kindness crossed me; the sum it was to her; the pleasure she had a right

LAMB'S ESSAY (*Cont'd*)

taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give everything." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavours to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house slightly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my particular palate. It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat or some nice thing into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt, at this time of day, that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial and the very coxcombry of charity, school-

LAMB'S LETTER (*Cont'd*)

to expect that I—not the old impostor—should take in eating her cake; the ingratitude by which, under the colour of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose. I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously that I think I never suffered the like; and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy, and it proved a lesson to me ever after.

LAMB'S ESSAY (*Cont'd*)

boy-like, I made him, a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger that I had never seen before and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present!—and the odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of almsgiving and out-of-place hypoc-

LAMB'S ESSAY. (*Cont'd*)
risky of goodness; and above
all I wished never to see the
face again of that insidious,
good-for-nothing, grey old
impostor.

KINDS OF ESSAY AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

The question arises as to what type of essay you will write. The qualities which have been discussed are found in all types in varying degree. You, and you alone, must decide on your subject. Only if you have, in imagination or reality, experienced your subject, can you possibly make an informal essay about it or introduce the personal note that so largely helps to establish the charm of the writing. In the following pages let us take up a few general types of essay, and see how they may be developed.

1. The Reminiscent Essay

The reminiscent essay has usually no special idea behind it. It arises from the cherished memory of some adventure, some discovery. Thoughts about such experiences naturally follow, and need not be suppressed. But experience, not thought, is fundamental. Thackeray illustrates this well in his essay called *Tunbridge Toys*. Here the author dips into his experience of forty years before and begins his essay with the words, "I wonder whether those little silver pencil-cases with a movable almanac at the butt-end are still favorite implements with boys, and whether peddlars still hawk

them about the country?" He might as well have chosen, of course, the joy in grandmother's cookies or any similar subject. He continues the essay with statements of the joy of owning such a case years ago. Another writer might continue from that point with the notion of how futile such inventions usually are, but Thackeray, following his own bent, is drawn to thinking of the joys of having spending money. Two thirds of the essay after the first paragraph are devoted to this thought, the core of it being, perhaps, "If you have any little friends at school, out with your half-crowns, my friend, and impart to those little ones the little fleeting joys of their age." All this he weaves round his own experience with and without such money. Then, with perfectly good essay logic, he is led to discuss for the remainder of the essay the novels that used to circulate in Tunbridge forty years ago. Of the millions of lines that might lead from A to B he has chosen the one that at the moment of writing attracted him most.

Stevenson in his *Memories and Portraits* draws upon his experience of people and countryside to re-create for himself and to create anew for others simple human joys of the senses. So you may rely on your readers' interest in an essay about the "old swimmin' hole," with its possibilities for sunburn, drowning, and thrashings as well as for undiluted fun; or you can safely expect a reminiscent interest on their part in your essay about the old days of skating and coasting, the dangers of the amateur ski jump or the flimsy rafts on the pond, the early rising and the digging of worms for the day's fishing trip that resulted in a few "shiners," or in nothing, or perhaps in a beautiful

string of trout. The first time you climbed a mountain, the first time you asked a girl to go to a party with you, or accepted a boy's invitation to be his guest, your first experience in a corn field, the ways in which you used to bother the traffic officer at the corner—all these and scores like them are good material for reminiscent essays.

You will, of course, rely largely upon the senses to cross the gap between you and your reader. The more real you can make the feeling of the water at the swimming hole or the scowl of the traffic officer, the better. You must remember that your readers' memories will be stirred by appeal to their sense of color and sound and smell. If you have not already studied description, you might do well to read Chapter XI. You must also rely on the intimacy of your treatment. Since this is your experience, you know better than any one else what quality it had and what were your personal feelings. Make this quality and these feelings completely clear; make them stand out in the round; make the reader understand even if he has never experienced them himself.

What distinguishes the reminiscent essay from a bit of autobiographical narrative? The essay is more casual in its method and more intimate in its mood. Autobiography is bound to follow chronological sequence or to fit facts into logical groupings. The essayist, on the other hand, after relating an episode or describing a sensation, may remark casually, "That reminds me," and pursue the train of his associations wherever they may lead. The essayist, too, displays his informality in an easy, friendly, almost confidential

attitude toward the reader; the writer of autobiography, however frank, keeps a certain distance. Yet there are narrative essays which might be regarded as chapters in a biography, and on the other hand, there are lives which read with almost the zest and intimacy of essays. Remember that in the essay you are more free to express yourself—to follow your reminiscent vein into whatever pleasant or interesting bypaths you may choose; no trifle is too trivial; but you are also under a greater obligation to express yourself, to reveal your own individuality, your own reactions to experience, not those of a hundred others.

EXERCISES

1. Study Thackeray's *Tunbridge Toys* (p. 262). What reminiscences does Thackeray evoke? Are they all introduced in the same way? How are they connected? Are they visualized? Are they touched with humor? Is the conclusion effective? Why?

2. Write a reminiscent essay.

2. *Hobbies and Hatreds*

The general nature of an essay about a hobby or a hatred is obvious. You may begin with the frank statement that you like walnut furniture or black coffee, or dislike guinea pigs or old men with beards or what you will. Immediately you perceive that the essay will presumably do two things: it will discuss the thing liked or hated, and it will probably discuss the reasons for the liking or hating. Here you diverge from the purely reminiscent essay, which usually has no special

idea. You begin with a statement that you care more for Beethoven's music than for that of any other composer. Your reader must be told what you find in the music, whether emotional power, or intellectual challenge, or fine architecture, or what. Then he is set to asking himself what the value of any of these things is. You will do well to give him some hints. Or you start off with stating your delight in old clothes—they are so comfortable, so easy that they make you think that all's well with the world. Well, what if all is well with the world? Before you know it, you will have discussed a special suit or gown that has been a valued friend, will have told of the times it has been a really deep joy to you, and will have examined somewhat the value of feeling that life is safe and serene.

There is no end to the list of subjects; as there are many people and things, so are there many people who like and many who dislike these same things. Your delight is fine doorways, or deep armchairs, or watermelon on hot days, or the flight of doves over a city square, or a shower and a rub-down. Your misery is an obstinate salt-shaker on a wet day, or a flat tire in the broiling sun, or a course in Colonial charters, or fat young women who complain of the cruelty of the scales but insist on a few more chocolates. Perhaps punctuation has plunged you into despair. Then the topic may inspire you to exquisite fooling on the vagaries of commas and colons.

These hobbies and hatreds are not to be too deadly serious. If saving money is your hobby, and you save for six months rigorously and then spend all your savings for some coveted treasure, and gaily begin saving

again, well and good. But if you save all the time, and always sit in the second gallery because the seats are cheaper, and have already accumulated several thousand dollars, and intend to increase the number to many, many more, even if you almost die doing so—do not write an essay on that subject. Better choose the long line of childhood pets, the rabbits and the guinea pigs and the pigeons and the cats and the dogs and the turtles and the birds, for, seeing across a lapse of years, you will regard these things in a mellow light, with humor and reasonable lightness of heart.

It is easy to write about enthusiasms and antipathies; it is unfortunately easy to gush. All the more reason is there for winnowing out the best of your thoughts, the best of your phrases, and for casting away the chaff.

EXERCISES

1. What various ways does Stark Young use in his *Mad Money* (p. 269) to express his hatred of the hard-boiled? What use does he make of Santayana's *Life of Reason*? What, of the newspaper? Explain the neatness of the title and the conclusion.

2. Write an essay on something you like or dislike.

3. *The Nature Essay*

The nature essay may deal with nature itself or your joy in nature—or both. If you are an enthusiastic and accurate observer of the earth and the sky and their crawling or leaping or flying inhabitants, or have watched any one thing, clouds, cornfields, locusts, wild cats, take one of them as a subject for an informal, descriptive essay. Have you studied some bird or ani-

mal, his manners, his home life, his diet, his complexes, his attitude toward man? Have you observed the range of colors in the winter woods, or the spectrum of sunrise, or the rhythm of the rollers that boom up the beach? Here are opportunities to tell of curious matters or of the beauty that passes daily before the dulled eyes of practical people. If you are not a habitual observer of such things, do not attempt such a topic.

But perhaps you love the outdoors for other reasons, for the physical sensations you enjoy, for the exhilaration of riding or hiking or sailing or mowing or hunting, and for the delicious drowsiness that comes over you after a day in the open. Here, too, are excellent materials for essays, provided that you can recall your sensations vividly and sharply.

The number of available subjects is well-nigh bewildering. Winter sports almost beg for treatment: the joys of skating over the booming ice through the nipping air, of skiing down the hillside with the chance of a tumble, of building snow forts in the back yard and fighting with the next-street enemy. Summer is even more provocative: the dreamy romance of the canoe, its peace and intimacy; the calm of fishing alone or in company, in deep sea or the farm brook, with fancy fly or bent pin; swimming or beach bathing; tramping across hill and plain, with birds and beasts for intimate fellows. Out of the emotional influences of nature—of desert sands and sagebrush, of northern lights and Milky Way, of sea mist and lake fog—delightful essays may spring. The joys and worries of gardening, whether with flowers or vegetables, the

heroic struggle against weeds, bugs, worms, blight, rust, mildew, frost—where is a better subject? Even the cruelty of animal existence, the constant fear, the suspended sentence of doom that hangs over all living, the endless war of species upon species, even this offers a somber theme for a somber essay.

In writing of nature the essayist must be careful not to sentimentalize. The little fir tree at the foot of the hill may perhaps seem to the fervid writer to be eager and wistful to climb the hill, but really fir trees have no such aspirations. So far as humanity can tell, stones and twigs and mountains and brooks do not suffer or aspire or rejoice. We do these things for them as we gaze upon them. The soft allurements to sentimentalize over inanimate things, to indulge in what is called "the pathetic fallacy," seems to be glowingly beautiful, but good sense proves it mawkish. Properly viewed, however, nature offers a well-nigh endless range of subjects.

EXERCISES

1. Study Peattie's *Pages from An Almanac* (page 274). What different approaches to nature do you find? Is there any "gush" about these essays? Is there any evidence of close observation? What sources of interest do they possess? Can you answer the question, "Why is the writer of these essays a higher and happier type of human being than the women described in *Mad Money*?"

2. Write on some aspect of nature which you have acutely observed, either for itself or in connection with sport or work.

4. *The Essay of Ideas*

Often you will find that the root of your essay is an idea. You are led through circumstances to say to yourself, "What a change the sudden acquirement of wealth makes in a person!" or, "Some kinds of idleness are praiseworthy," or, "The chief result of owning an automobile is envy for those who possess larger cars." There is the beginning for an essay. Of the second remark Stevenson made his essay, *An Apology for Idlers*. Once more let it be said that the idea must be one which can be entertained with a degree of ease and light-heartedness. You will not write a good informal essay on the thought, "We ought at once to abolish capital punishment!" Or if you do, you will have to be a genius. Remember that the informal essay is neither a fight nor an encyclopedia article. Do not try to drive a reader into your point of view, and do not stuff him with facts. Had Stevenson raved at the idlers of Palm Beach and Park Avenue or emptied a file of information on our parasitic classes he would have written something quite different from an essay. Instead, he toys with his idea, analyzes it, makes it personal and human, and stops.

You may recall a person who illustrates your idea, and write for a bit about him. Questions arise as you warm to your subject. What if things were quite different? What if such an idea had never been? What if we are amusingly wrong in our attitude and need to make a right-about? The amusing side of the whole situation suddenly strikes you, the irony or the quaintness, and you put that in. You will do these things in

concrete form—a scrap of conversation, a bit of description, an instance from history, a quotation from a play or novel or poem. You must watch to see that you treat the idea emotionally as well as intellectually, that you make a warm appeal and leave your reader pleased. Stevenson uses bits from his own personal experience to show the value of idleness, and creates imaginary situations to illustrate his theme.

The range of ideas is very large. That twenty-two brave young athletes should fight to the last ounce of their strength to carry an innocent, inflated pigskin across a white line—is not that struggle, properly viewed in all its relationships, lucrative for an essay? That millions of somewhat intelligent human beings should day after day, almost hour after hour, insert strips of flavored rubber into their mouths and patiently chew the resulting ball, as a cow her cud, offers possibilities for philosophy, humor, and piquancy. The way in which a fraternity pledge pin sometimes turns a meek freshman into a snob; the way in which we allow shapely young men to drive us, by their gyrations and energy, into violent cheering at a game that really does not interest us; the perversion of Christmas into an orgy of senseless buying for people whom we dislike; the reckless disregard that men show for their lives in stunt flying or motor racing; the slaving of a business man, denying himself pleasures and the fullness of life in order that he may leave a fortune for his heirs to quarrel about—all these and countless others are fit ideas for informal essays, if regarded with sufficient elasticity and poise and humor.

In this type of essay you will need to guard against

the tendency to ask yourself, "Have I convinced my reader?" Do not act out in the essay the counterpart of seizing your listener by his lapel and insisting that he must believe. That will never do. From whatever store of mellow wisdom you may possess—and the larger the store, the better—you will choose the things that will help to give your reader a pleasant journey through your essay and at the same time, perhaps, enlighten him.

EXERCISES

1. Study Stevenson's *An Apology for Idlers* (p. 276). Devote particular attention to the style. What methods has Stevenson used to make his point clear, vivid, amusing?

2. Write an essay on some unusual idea which has occurred to you. Let your treatment be light, and your style as good as you can make it.

MODEL ESSAYS

TUNBRIDGE TOYS *

by William Makepeace Thackeray

I wonder whether those little silver pencil-cases with a movable almanac at the butt-end are still favourite implements with boys, and whether pedlars still hawk them about the country? Are there pedlars and hawkers still, or are rustics and children grown too sharp to deal with them? Those pencil-cases, as far as my memory serves me, were not of much use. The screw, upon which the movable almanac turned, was constantly getting loose. The 1 of the table would work from its moorings, under Tuesday or Wednesday, as the case might be, and you would find, on examination, that Th. or W. was the 23½ of the month (which was

* From W. M. Thackeray, *Roundabout Papers*.

absurd on the face of the thing), and in a word your cherished pencil-case an utterly unreliable time-keeper. Nor was this a matter of wonder. Consider the position of a pencil-case in a boy's pocket. You had hardbake in it; marbles, kept in your purse when the money was all gone; your mother's purse, knitted so fondly and supplied with a little bit of gold, long since—prodigal little son!—scattered amongst the swine—I mean amongst brandy-balls, open tarts, three-cornered puffs, and similar abominations. You had a top and string; a knife; a piece of cobbler's wax; two or three bullets; a 'Little Warbler;' and I, for my part, remember, for a considerable period, a brass-barreled pocket-pistol (which would fire beautifully, for with it I shot off a button from Butt Major's jacket);—with all these things, and ever so many more, clinking and rattling in your pockets, and your hands, of course, keeping them in perpetual movement, how could you expect your movable almanac not to be twisted out of its place now and again—your pencil-case to be bent—your liquorice water not to leak out of your bottle over the cobbler's wax, your bull's eyes not to ram up the lock and barrel of your pistol, and so forth?

In the month of June, thirty-seven years ago, I bought one of those pencil-cases from a boy whom I shall call Hawker, and who was in my form. Is he dead? Is he a millionaire? Is he a bankrupt now? He was an immense screw at school, and I believe to this day that the value of the thing for which I owed and eventually paid three-and-sixpence, was in reality not one-and-nine.

I certainly enjoyed the case at first a good deal, and amused myself with twiddling round the movable calendar. But this pleasure wore off. The jewel, as I said, was not paid for, and Hawker, a large and violent boy, was exceedingly unpleasant as a creditor. His constant remark was, 'When are you going to pay me that three-and-sixpence? What sneaks your relations must be! They come to see you. You go out to them on Saturdays and Sundays, and they never give you anything! Don't tell *me*, you little humbug!'

and so forth. The truth is that my relations were respectable; but my parents were making a tour in Scotland; and my friends in London, whom I used to go and see, were most kind to me, certainly, but somehow never tipped me. That term, of May to August 1823, passed in agonies, then, in consequence of my debt to Hawker. What was the pleasure of a calendar pencil-case in comparison with the doubt and torture of mind occasioned by the sense of the debt, and the constant reproach in that fellow's scowling eyes and gloomy coarse reminders? How was I to pay off such a debt out of sixpence a week? ludicrous! Why did not some one come to see me, and tip me? Ah! my dear sir, if you have any little friends at school, go and see them, and do the natural thing by them. You won't miss the sovereign. You don't know what a blessing it will be to them. Don't fancy they are too old—try 'em. And they will remember you, and bless you in future days; and their gratitude shall accompany your dreary after life; and they shall meet you kindly when thanks for kindness are scant. Oh mercy! shall I ever forget that sovereign you gave me, Captain Bob? or the agonies of being in debt to Hawker? In that very term, a relation of mine was going to India. I actually was fetched from school in order to take leave of him. I am afraid I told Hawker of this circumstance. I own I speculated upon my friend's giving me a pound. A pound? Pooh! A relation going to India, and deeply affected at parting from his darling kinsman, might give five pounds to the dear fellow! . . . There was Hawker when I came back—of course there he was. As he looked in my scared face, his turned livid with rage. He muttered curses, terrible from the lips of so young a boy. My relation, about to cross the ocean to fill a lucrative appointment, asked me with much interest about my progress at school, heard me construe a passage of Eutropius, the pleasing Latin work on which I was then engaged; gave me a God bless you, and sent me back to school; upon my word of honour, without so much as a half-crown! It is all very well, my dear sir, to say that boys contract habits

of expecting tips from their parents' friends, that they become avaricious, and so forth. Avaricious! fudge! Boys contract habits of tart and toffee eating, which they do not carry into after life. On the contrary, I wish I *did* like 'em. What raptures of pleasure one could have now for five shillings, if one could but pick it off the pastry-cook's tray! No. If you have any little friends at school, out with your half-crowns, my friend, and impart to those little ones the little fleeting joys of their age.

Well, then. At the beginning of August 1823, Bartlemy-tide holidays came, and I was to go to my parents, who were at Tunbridge Wells. My place in the coach was taken by my tutor's servants—'Bolt-in-Tun,' Fleet Street, seven o'clock in the morning, was the word. My tutor, the Reverend Edward P——, to whom I hereby present my best compliments, had a parting interview with me: gave me my little account for my governor: the remaining part of the coach-hire; five shillings for my own expenses; and some five-and-twenty shillings on an old account which had been over-paid, and was to be restored to my family.

Away I ran and paid Hawker his three-and-six. Ouf! what a weight it was off my mind! (He was a Norfolk boy, and used to go home from Mrs. Nelson's 'Bell Inn,' Aldgate—but that is not to the point.) The next morning, of course, we were an hour before the time. I and another boy shared a hackney-coach, two-and-six; porter for putting luggage on coach, threepence. I had no more money of my own left. Rasherwell, my companion, went into the 'Bolt-in-Tun' coffee-room, and had a good breakfast. I couldn't: because, though I had five-and-twenty shillings of my parents' money, I had none of my own, you see.

I certainly intended to go without breakfast, and still remember how strongly I had that resolution in my mind. But there was that hour to wait. A beautiful August morning—I am very hungry. There is Rasherwell 'tucking' away in the coffee-room. I pace the street, as sadly almost as if I had been coming to school, not going thence. I turn into

a court by mere chance—I vow it was by mere chance—and there I see a coffee-shop with a placard in the window. ‘Coffee, Twopence, Round of buttered toast, Twopence.’ And here am I hungry, penniless, with five-and-twenty shillings of my parents’ money in my pocket.

What would you have done? You see I had had my money, and spent it in that pencil-case affair. The five-and-twenty shillings were a trust—by me to be handed over.

But then would my parents wish their only child to be actually without breakfast? Having this money and being so hungry, so *very* hungry, mightn’t I take ever so little? Mightn’t I at home eat as much as I chose?

Well, I went into the coffee-shop, and spent four-pence. I remembered the taste of the coffee and toast to this day—a peculiar, muddy, not-sweet-enough, most fragrant coffee—a rich, rancid, yet not-buttered-enough, delicious toast. The waiter had nothing. At any rate, fourpence, I know, was the sum I spent. And the hunger appeased, I got on the coach a guilty being.

At the last stage—what is its name? I have forgotten in seven-and-thirty years—there is an inn with a little green and trees before it; and by the trees there is an open carriage. It is our carriage. Yes, there are Prince and Blucher, the horses; and my parents in the carriage. Oh! how I had been counting the days until this one came? Oh! how happy had I been to see them yesterday! But there was that fourpence. All the journey down the toast had choked me, and the coffee poisoned me.

I was in such a state of remorse about the fourpence, that I forgot the maternal joy and caresses, the tender paternal voice. I pulled out the twenty-four shillings and eightpence with a trembling hand.

‘Here’s your money,’ I gasp out, ‘which Mr. P—— owes you, all but fourpence. I owed three-and-sixpence to Hawker out of my money for a pencil-case, and I had none left, and I took fourpence of yours, and had some coffee at a shop.’

I suppose I must have been choking whilst uttering this confession.

'My dear boy,' says the governor, 'why didn't you go and breakfast at the hotel?'

'He must be starved,' says my mother.

I had confessed; I had been a prodigal; I had been taken back to my parents' arms again. It was not a very great crime as yet, or a very long career of prodigality; but don't we know that a boy who takes a pin which is not his own, will take a thousand pounds when occasion serves, bring his parents' grey heads with sorrow to the grave, and carry his own to the gallows! Witness the career of Dick Idle, upon whom our friend Mr. Sala has been discoursing. Dick only began by playing pitch-and-toss on a tombstone: playing fair, for what we know: and even for that sin he was promptly caned by the beadle. The bamboo was ineffectual to cane that reprobate's bad courses out of him. From pitch-and-toss he proceeded to manslaughter if necessary: to highway robbery; to Tyburn and the rope there. Ah! Heaven be thanked, my parents' heads are still above the grass, and mine still out of the noose.

As I look up from my desk, I see Tunbridge Wells Common and the rocks, the strange familiar place which I remember forty years ago. Boys saunter over the green with stumps and cricket-bats. Other boys gallop by on the riding-master's hacks. I protest it is 'Cramp, Riding Master,' as it used to be in the reign of George IV., and that Centaur Cramp must be at least a hundred years old. Yonder comes a footman with a bundle of novels from the library. Are they as good as *our* novels? Oh! how delightful they were! Shades of Valancour, awful ghost of Manfroni, how I shudder at your appearance! Sweet image of Thaddeus of Warsaw, how often has this almost infantile hand tried to depict you in a Polish cap and richly embroidered tights! And as for Corinthian Tom in light blue pantaloons and hessians, and Jerry Hawthorne from the country, can all the fashion, can all the splendour of real life which these

eyes have subsequently beheld, can all the wit I have heard or read in later times, compare with your fashion, with your brilliancy, with your delightful grace, and sparkling vivacious rattle?

Who knows? They *may* have kept those very books at the library still—at the well-remembered library on the Pantiles, where they sell that delightful, useful Tunbridge ware. I will go and see. I wend my way to the Pantiles, the queer little old-world Pantiles, where, a hundred years since, so much good company came to take its pleasure. Is it possible, that in the past century, gentlefolks of the first rank (as I read lately in a lecture on George II. in the *Cornhill Magazine*) assembled here and entertained each other with gaming, dancing, fiddling, and tea? There are fiddlers, harpers, and trumpeters performing at this moment in a weak little old balcony, but where is the fine company? Where are the earls, duchesses, bishops, and magnificent embroidered gamesters? A half-dozen of children and their nurses are listening to the musicians; an old lady or two in a poke bonnet passes; and for the rest, I see but an uninteresting population of native tradesmen. As for the library, its window is full of pictures of burly theologians, and their works, sermons, apologues, and so forth. Can I go in and ask the young ladies at the counter for ‘Manfroni, or the One-handed Monk,’ and ‘Life in London, or the Adventures of Corinthian Tom, Jeremiah Hawthorn, Esquire, and their friend Bob Logic’?—absurd. I turn away abashed from the case-ment—from the Pantiles—no longer Pantiles—but Parade. I stroll over the Common and survey the beautiful purple hills around, twinkling with a thousand bright villas, which have sprung up over this charming ground since first I saw it. What an admirable scene of peace and plenty! What a delicious air breathes over the heath, blows the cloud-shadows across it, and murmurs through the full-clad trees! Can the world show a land fairer, richer, more cheerful? I see a portion of it when I look up from the window at which I write. But fair scene, green woods, bright terraces

gleaming in sunshine, and purple clouds swollen with summer rain—nay, the very pages over which my head bends—disappear from before my eyes. They are looking backwards, back into forty years off, into a dark room, into a little house hard by on the Common here, in the Bartlemytide holidays. The parents have gone to town for two days: the house is all his own, his own and a grim old maid-servant's, and a little boy is seated at night in the lonely drawing-room, poring over 'Manfroni, or the One-handed Monk', so frightened that he scarcely dares to turn round.

MAD MONEY *

by Stark Young

For the half hour before my train I loitered over a pavement book-stall and bought finally *The Life of Reason*, a worn First Volume, with the Introduction. There was a copy on my shelves at home, but this one could do no harm. And a few minutes later I sat reading it, admiring all anew Santayana's lucid world. The conversation of the two people on the seat ahead of me began to fill my ears.

"Party's right!" one of them was saying.

I looked at them, two women, one of them something under forty, the other around nineteen. The young lady wore sport clothes, a kind of rough lavender, with a round hat and a cock's feather, and had long earrings of cornelian, not bad in their way. She had clear and delicate features, and had plucked her eyebrows out to a line, a thread, that went very well with the bones of her head. Her companion had a straight-brimmed hat of red straw, from which the vermilion light reflected down upon her face, with ravishing intentions that were encoored by a blaze of rouge. She too had plucked her eyebrows, but the line that remained did not in the least correspond to the skull beneath, and the effect was a sort of puffy stare. Her hands were plump and

* From *Encaustics*, The New Republic, Inc., copyright 1926. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

her thumb-nails too short; but she, and the young lady also, had polished and wrought at all their nails till they were like some shocking variety of horn, like claws, and, even more repulsive, like the fresh viscera one sees in the windows of poultry shops.

The two were covering some social event when I first overheard them. The young lady was speaking:

"And so I went. And I had to drag a blind and all that. And you know when you get like that you don't know what's on, whether he'll swack or not, and whether he'll bring you a son-chariot or a hay-burner——"

They talked on and I began to fall behind, as one does at a play in a foreign tongue. I heard phrases that I knew and phrases that I did not know. I seemed to be seeing through slits, now darkness, now lights. And when the words got more comprehensible the content left me still farther off.

"So I said, 'Let's hurry!' and he said 'All right!' and Mother said 'Look here, you'll be late sure!' and I said 'No, we won't,' and we were not either. And you never saw such a push in your life as was there, believe me, push is the word. You know I see where a girl shot a fellow the other night up at a barracks somewhere. It's awful. The war was terrible, wasn't it!"

"Did you see," the older woman replied, "where there were ten women suing for divorce in one day? Isn't it awful! I saw Mae Murray in Fascination, isn't it wonderful? Who do you think's the greatest movie actress? I said to Tom 'I think Mae Murray is,' but Tom said 'You may not agree with me but you know I think Katherine MacDonald is,' he said——" And so on. And meanwhile I was feeling very small.

When the two had got off the train I turned to the man on the seat beside me, a pleasant-enough-faced personage of thirty-five or so, with a small mustache and waving hair. He had looked up from his evening paper to watch the two women going down the aisle, and when they were gone had looked around smiling. "Skirts? Eh?" he said. I took the

chance to ask him about the talk I had heard, some of the expressions at least. What was it, I asked, when you dragged a blind?

To drag a blind, he said, was to go to a party with some one you had never seen. And to swack was to get drunk. A son-chariot was the car you got for your son and heir; and then of course you'd know a hay-burner was a horse.

I tried other phrases that had stuck in my head without their sentences. What was it to throw a mean bust?

"To have a fine figure," he exclaimed. "Like saying she's a mean kisser. Special or extra or something like that." "Oh," I said.

And what was a temp-stick that the young lady said she would bite off she was so mad? Temp-stick, he said, was thermometer. And pacifiers were violets.

Then, for one last question, I wanted to know, what was mad money, the young lady had said that of course she had her mad money along when she left home.

Mad money, he exclaimed, quite seriously, is what they take with them to get home on in case they fall out with the fellow they've gone with.

"So that's that," my companion remarked, and went back to his paper.

Mad money, I thought, the phrase was not bad.

And I sat thinking of that company of three, the two women and the man. It was not the slang, there is always slang one way or another, and often lively and likeable enough, obviously. But it was the talk—that strange and elusive emptiness of it, always direct discourse, "I said, he said, she said"; always mere statement, never an abstraction or generalization or conclusion, never a word that cut down even a little into its matter or showed upon itself a tinge of experience or the shock of living. And it was the faces. How strangely empty the two women's faces were! You see them repeated in swarms on a New York street and in the trains everywhere. Faces empty though amiably hard; the faces of people who want nothing very much.

Faces that are active, competent for the ends desired, jerked into lines with idle energy and idle possessiveness; but without any depth after all, untouched by things for which men have died, and with the expression somehow of oddly grown-up children, of experience rattled in on top of a twelve-year-old mind. In them humanity is visibly reduced to its platitude. They are like dinner plates; they have about as much subtlety to them as a painted oyster. And how far, I reflected, was all this spreading over the country? Or over the world? And most of all what was to come of it?

It would be foolish, I knew, to despair over it, to become shrill about it. As foolish as growing cynical over the weather would be, which only takes away one's balance and resource. But I sat there feeling very lonely and lost. There was something of fright in the feeling, too, such as you may feel when you look into some of the popular magazines. What is it all about? It does not seem to be brutal or to be witty or clever or well done or barbarous or intelligent. And the millions of people that consume it all—you have the sense of being foreign, lost. If it were only barbaric, you might feel better; there is hope in barbarism and beauty in it, as every one admits. But this active and competent and shallow adequacy!

My companion was reading his paper still, and I opened my book.

I read two paragraphs and sat there thinking of Santayana's writing. I thought of its hard glory, its clear outline, its texture of rich and fine mentality. How well he knows, too, that beautiful and magnificent theory carries with it the obligation to say it completely, to give it the style, the imagery, the movement, the form—in a word—that the soul of it essentially is. Santayana knows where philosophy ends and poetry or religion or mysticism begins; he knows their relationship to life as he knows the relationship of philosophy to life. His thought may not be something to found a new gospel on perhaps—I am glad that it is not, there is so much gospel fruit in the land. But when more succulent

and evangelical creeds fail one, Santayana may be good to rest upon. With him the mind gets its due noblesse oblige. With him feeling is distinguished and existence aristocratic.

And then I began to try to express for myself just what is that strange effect one gets from Santayana at his best. It is an effect of tragic peace, a kind of rich definiteness of all desire and knowledge and beauty, a kind of brilliance that is made up of our limitations, a deep sense of some fatal splendor of light that is more beautiful but less happy than dreams.

From these meditations my neighbor distracted me by turning over his paper and getting the last page of it smoothed out to suit himself. He appeared to have mastered the entire contents so far. My thoughts left Santayana and began to wander over that last newspaper page. A column about China, battles and massacres; a woman had jumped out of a window; a rum ship had been seized by federal agents—I knew the brand of it, narrative, events, with no comment, no point, no application, no hint of the surrounding complexities of life. Incidents and adolescence. Pure action. Juvenility of fact.

My eye fell then on a heading half toward the bottom; there naturally enough, I reasoned, the news conveyed being less murderous than the Chinese affair:

SHIMMY DANCER ASKS DAMAGES FOR
PERMANENT LOSS OF WIGGLE

Almost any one, you might think, would smile or be amazed at that except the young man—and perhaps the millions like him. But all he did was to give a little jerk of his elbow when he saw this piece of news and bring the lines closer to his eyes. Then he began to read with profound absorption. It was evidently nothing strange to him, it had punch, it went, it belonged, it was life.

I looked back at the Santayana and put it carefully in my pocket. Some day, perhaps, I thought, when I could no longer stand the company I was with, he would be my mad money and take me home again.

PAGES FROM AN ALMANAC *

by Donald Culross Peattie

January Second

There was once a boy of eleven who heard that the Pole star is the only one that always remained in the same position—the fixed, the guiding star round which the whole of the bright firmament appears to swing. The child decided to find this star, and he had no instruments with which to do it. But a dearth of instruments, the despair of the mediocre, is the making of gifted persons. So he made himself a cardboard tube (quite without any lens, of course) and put it on a stand. He fixed it upon star after star, but they all moved rapidly from the field of vision. Yet his patience was the equal of the task he set himself, and at last he found the star that did not alter.

The moral of this story should be that he turned out to be Copernicus. But he didn't; he was in later life the librarian to the Empress Maria Theresa, a position as exalted as you choose to think it. The real moral, I suspect, is that every one who discovers something for himself is the richer for it, and richer in inverse proportion to the equipment with which he started out.

But there is a moral back of this, and that is that the distant and terrible sun Polaris has not always been our Pole star. Uneasily shifts our temporary planet on its axis, like a top wavering as it dies. For, a thousand years ago, it was Thuban, one of the bright stars in the Dragon, that was the zenith star above our Pole, and the tombs of Egypt were so constructed that from the low door of the house of death one could behold it, the one star—as man supposed, that would ever remain in its place. To-morrow—only twelve thousand years hence, that will be Vega of the Lyre.

* From D. C. Peattie, *An Almanac for Moderns*. By permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

January Twenty-second

The moment when a fresh fall of snow is on the ground is the opportunity for finding out what your animal neighbors do with themselves and where they go. If you follow up a field mouse's dainty tracks, with the characteristic mark of the dragging tail, like a little sled mark but with only one runner, you will run him literally to earth. To-day I pried up the crust where the clew to a field mouse disappeared under a snow bank, and discovered that beneath the snow there are runways now like those he has beneath the sod in summer. One hall branched into two, two into four, and so on into a labyrinth it would take his nose and whiskers to unravel, and I concluded that my small neighbor was at home to no one.

Squirrel tracks always begin and end at tree boles, and you may know them further by the great leaps between the prints, and the smallness of the actual foot-mark, where the little nut-cracker lands with all paws close together.

But cottontail tracks differ from all others in that they are regularly trodden, like village lanes; indeed, all this wood hereabout is one great cottontail village. A hare in full flight will streak across the ground in any direction, but under normal conditions it traverses regular lanes, as if it were not the feckless creature it is but had the most serious routine business. I know where these lanes run in summer, by the beaten grasses; in winter the tracks precisely overlie the same place, and the goshawk is said to walk calmly along them, stalking unwary youngsters. But though cottontails must be the staple on which the entire carnivorous diet of the wood depend, they are still the most abundant mammal in the countryside.

July First

I have no quarrel with the people who long for the sea. The soul craves immensities, fresh emptiness where it can repose. But I would go now, if I could, to the mountains, and I don't mean what they call mountains in the Berkshires.

Some gentle hills, a mere unevenness in the land, will not help me. I need a peak to lift the heart, a forest dense as moss upon a rock, laced with foaming brooks.

But on the clearest days the Blue Ridge is not visible here even as a mirage, a high tossed smoky line penciled on the west. Only within me can I hear the song of a waterfall—not the obliterating crash of a Niagara, but an airy cascade, spilling waters from tilted ledges. Water poured so fine that it shatters on the air and drifts, as a smoke, as a lightly laden breeze, amongst the filmy leaves of the sweet Appalachian flora. There the maidenhair and the foam flower tremble forever in the breeze of the fall, and the faces of the mountain bluets, deep gentian blue in tiny forests of thread-fine stems, are spangled with spray. And over the gleaming rocks creep the mosses—the deep black moss, the frail Jungermannias sending out green fingers everywhere—and the flat liverworts sprawl fast under the overhanging ledges, translucent emerald green, like seaweeds, or gray-green and nubbly, like a lizard's skin. There the gentle wood frog lives, and in the wet moss the little red triton runs, perpetually grinning, a slippery living bit of coral. Who, of a burning day upon the plain, cannot feel the coolness, the repose, of recurring phrases in the driest of botany books, "in rich mountain woods," "in wet moss," "on dripping rocks," "in cold springs"?

AN APOLOGY FOR IDLERS *

by Robert Louis Stevenson

BOSWELL: *We grow weary when idle.*

JOHNSON: *That is, sir, because others being busy, we want company; but if we were idle, there would be no growing weary; we should all entertain one another.*

Just now, when every one is bound, under pain of a decree in absence convicting him of *lèse-respectability*, to

* From *Virginibus Puerisque*. Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

enter on some lucrative profession, and labor therein with something not far short of enthusiasm, a cry from the opposite party who are content when they have enough, and like to look on and enjoy in the meanwhile, savors a little of bravado and gasconade. And yet this should not be. Idleness so-called, which does not consist of doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognized in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class, has as good a right to state its position as industry itself. It is admitted that the presence of people who refuse to enter in the great handicap race for sixpenny pieces is at once an insult and a disenchantment for those who do. A fine fellow (as we see so many) takes his determination, votes for the sixpences, and, in the emphatic American idiom, "goes for" them. And while such an one is plowing distressfully up the road, it is not hard to understand his resentment, when he perceives cool persons in the meadows by the wayside, lying with a handkerchief over their ears and a glass at their elbow. Alexander is touched in a very delicate place by the disregard of Diogenes. Where was the glory of having taken Rome for these tumultuous barbarians who poured into the Senate house and found the Fathers sitting silent and unmoved by their success? It is a sore thing to have labored along and scaled the arduous hilltops, and, when all is done, find humanity indifferent to your achievement. Hence physicists condemn the unphysical; financiers have only a superficial toleration for those who know little of stocks; literary persons despise the unlettered; and people of all pursuits combine to disparage those who have none.

But, though this is one difficulty of the subject, it is not the greatest. You could not be put in prison for speaking against industry, but you can be sent to Coventry for speaking like a fool. The greatest difficulty with most subjects is to do them well; therefore, please to remember this is an apology. It is certain that much may be judiciously argued in favor of diligence; only there is something to be said against it, and that is what, on the present occasion, I have

to say. To state one argument is not necessarily to be deaf to all others, and that a man has written a book of travels in Montenegro is no reason why he should never have been to Richmond.

It is surely beyond a doubt that people should be a good deal idle in youth. For though here and there a Lord Macaulay may escape from school honors with all his wits about him, most boys pay so dear for their medals that they never afterward have a shot in their locker, and begin the world bankrupt. And the same holds true during all the time a lad is educating himself, or suffering others to educate him. It must have been a very foolish old gentleman who addressed Johnson at Oxford in these words: "Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task." The old gentleman seems to have been unaware that many other things besides reading grow irksome, and not a few become impossible by the time a man has to use spectacles and cannot walk without a stick. Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life. It seems a pity to sit, like the Lady of Shalott, peering into a mirror, with your back turned on all the bustle and glamour of reality. And if a man reads very hard, as the old anecdote reminds us, he will have little time for thoughts.

If you look back on your own education, I am sure it will not be the full, vivid, instructive hours of truantry that you regret; you would rather cancel some lack-luster periods between sleep and waking in the class. For my own part, I have attended a good many lectures in my time. I still remember that the spinning of a top is a case of kinetic stability. I still remember that emphyteusis is not a disease, nor stillicide a crime. But, though I would not willingly part with such scraps of science, I do not set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that I came by in the open street while I was playing truant. This is not the moment to dilate on that mighty place of education,

which was the favorite school of Dickens and of Balzac and turns out yearly many inglorious masters in the Science of the Aspects of Life. Suffice it to say this: if a lad does not learn in the streets, it is because he has no faculty of learning. Nor is the truant always in the streets, for, if he prefers, he may go out by the gardened suburbs into the country. He may pitch on some tuft of lilacs over a barn and smoke innumerable pipes to the tune of the water on the stones. A bird will sing in the thicket. And there he may fall into a vein of kindly thought and see things in a new perspective. Why, if this be not education, what is? We may conceive Mr. Worldly Wiseman accosting such an one and the conversation that should thereupon ensue:

"How now, young fellow, what dost thou here?"

"Truly, sir, I take mine ease."

"Is not this the hour of the class? and shouldst thou not be plying thy Book with diligence, to the end thou mayest obtain knowledge?"

"Nay, but thus also I follow after Learning, by your leave."

"Learning, quotha! After what fashion, I pray thee? Is it mathematics?"

"No, to be sure."

"Is it metaphysics?"

"Nor that."

"Is it some language?"

"Nay, it is no language."

"Is it a trade?"

"Nor a trade neither."

"Why, then, what is't?"

"Indeed, sir, as a time may soon come for me to go upon Pilgrimage, I am desirous to note what is commonly done by persons in my case, and where are the ugliest Sloughs and Thickets on the Road; as also, what manner of Staff is of the best service. Moreover, I lie here, by this water, to learn by root-of-heart a lesson which my master teaches me to call Peace, or Contentment."

Hereupon Mr. Worldly Wiseman was much commoved with passion, and, shaking his cane with a very threatening countenance, broke forth upon this wise: "Learning, quotha!" he said; "I would have all such rogues scourged by the Hangman!"

And so he would go his way, ruffling out his cravat with a crackle of starch, like a turkey when it spread its feathers.

Now this, of Mr. Wiseman's, is the common opinion. A fact is not called a fact, but a piece of gossip, if it does not fall into one of your scholastic categories. An inquiry must be in some acknowledged direction, with a name to go by, or else you are not inquiring at all, only lounging; and the workhouse is too good for you. It is supposed that all knowledge is at the bottom of a well or the far end of a telescope. Sainte-Beuve, as he grew older, came to regard all experience as a single great book in which to study for a few years ere we go hence; and it seemed all one to him whether you should read in chapter XX, which is the differential calculus, or in chapter XXXIX, which is hearing the band play in the gardens. As a matter of fact, an intelligent person, looking out of his eyes and harkening in his ears, with a smile on his face all the time, will get more true education than many another in a life of heroic vigils. There is certainly some chill and arid knowledge to be found upon the summits of formal and laborious science; but it is all round about you, and for the trouble of looking, you will acquire the warm and palpitating facts of life. While others are filling their memory with a lumber of words, one-half of which they will forget before the week be out, your truant may learn some really useful art: to play the fiddle, to know a good cigar, or to speak with ease and opportunity to all varieties of men. Many who have "plied their book diligently" and know all about some one branch or another of accepted lore come out of the study with an ancient and owl-like demeanor and prove dry, stockish, and dyspeptic in all the better and brighter parts of life. Many make a large fortune, who remain underbred and pathetically stupid to the last. And

meantime there goes the idler, who began life along with them—by your leave—a different picture. He has had time to take care of his health and his spirits; he has been a great deal in the open air, which is the most salutary of all things for both body and mind; and, if he has never read the great Book in very recondite places, he has dipped into it and skimmed it over to excellent purpose. Might not the student afford some Hebrew roots, and the business man some of his half-crowns, for a share of the idler's knowledge of life at large and Art of Living? Nay, and the idler has another and more important quality than these. I mean his wisdom. He who has much looked on at the childish satisfaction of other people in their hobbies will regard his own with only a very ironical indulgence. He will not be heard among the dogmatists. He will have a great and cool allowance for all sorts of people and opinions. If he finds no out-of-the-way truths, he will identify himself with no very burning falsehood. His way takes him along a by-road, not much frequented, but very even and pleasant, which is called Commonplace Lane and leads to the Belvedere of Common Sense. Thence he shall command an agreeable, if no very noble prospect; and while others behold the East and West, the Devil and the Sunrise, he will be contentedly aware of a sort of morning hour upon all sublunary things, with an army of shadows running speedily and in many different directions into the great daylight of Eternity. The shadows and the generations, the shrill doctors and the plangent wars, go by into ultimate silence and emptiness; but, underneath all this, a man may see out of the Belvedere windows much green and peaceful landscape; many firelit parlors, good people laughing, drinking, and making love as they did before the Flood or the French Revolution; and the old shepherd telling his tale under the hawthorn.

Extreme *busyness*, whether at school or college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity. There is a sort of dead-alive, hack-

neyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country, or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and, unless Necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still. It is no good speaking to such folk; they cannot be idle, their nature is not generous enough, and they pass those hours in a sort of coma which are not dedicated to furious moiling in the gold-mill. When they do not require to go to the office, when they are not hungry and have no mind to drink, the whole breathing world is a blank to them. If they have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. To see them, you would suppose there was nothing to look at and no one to speak with; you would imagine they were paralyzed or alienated; and yet very possibly they are hard workers in their own way, and have good eyesight for a flaw in a deed or a turn of the market. They have been to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another, while they wait for the train. Before he was breeched he might have clambered on the boxes; when he was twenty he would have stared at the girls; but now the pipe is smoked out, the snuff-box empty, and my gentleman sits bolt upright upon a bench, with lamentable eyes. This does not appeal to me as being Success in Life.

But it is not only the person himself who suffers from his busy habits, but his wife and children, his friends and relations, and down to the very people he sits with in a railway

carriage or an omnibus. Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of many other things. And it is not by any means certain that a man's business is the most important thing he has to do. To an impartial estimate it will seem clear that many of the wisest, most virtuous, and most beneficent parts that are to be played upon the Theater of Life are filled by gratuitous performers, and pass, among the world at large, as phases of idleness. For in that Theater not only the walking gentlemen, singing chambermaids, and diligent fiddlers in the orchestra, but those who look on and clap their hands from the benches do really play a part and fulfil important offices toward the general result. You are no doubt very dependent on the care of your lawyer and stockbroker, of the guards and signalmen who convey you rapidly from place to place, and the policemen who walk the streets for your protection; but is there not a thought of gratitude in your heart for certain other benefactors who set you smiling when they fall in your way, or season your dinner with good company? Colonel Newcome helped to lose his friend's money; Fred Bayham had an ugly trick of borrowing shirts; and yet they were better people to fall among than Mr. Barnes. And, though Falstaff was neither sober nor very honest, I think I could name one or two long-faced Barabases whom the world could better have done without. Hazlitt mentions that he was more sensible of obligation to Northcote, who had never done him anything he could call a service, than to his whole circle of ostentatious friends; for he thought a good companion emphatically the greatest benefactor. I know there are people in the world who cannot feel grateful unless the favor has been done them at the cost of pain and difficulty. But this is a churlish disposition. A man may send you six sheets of letter-paper covered with the most entertaining gossip, or you may pass half an hour pleasantly, perhaps profitably, over an article of his; do you think the service would be greater if he had made the manuscript in his heart's blood, like a compact with the devil?

Do you really fancy you should be more beholden to your correspondent if he had been damning you all the while for your importunity? Pleasures are more beneficial than duties because, like the quality of mercy, they are not strained, and they are twice blest. There must always be two to a kiss, and there may be a score in a jest; but wherever there is an element of sacrifice, the favor is conferred with pain, and, among generous people, received with confusion. There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy, we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or, when they are disclosed, surprise nobody so much as the benefactor. The other day a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble with so jolly an air that he set every one he passed into a good humor; one of these persons, who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money with this remark: "You see what sometimes comes of looking pleased." If he had looked pleased before, he had now to look both pleased and mystified. For my part, I justify this encouragement of smiling rather than tearful children; I do not wish to pay for tears anywhere but upon the stage; but I am prepared to deal largely in the opposite commodity. A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of goodwill; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that—they practically demonstrate the great Theorem of the Livableness of Life. Consequently, if a person cannot be happy without remaining idle, idle he should remain. It is a revolutionary precept; but, thanks to hunger and the workhouse, one not easily to be abused; and, within practical limits, it is one of the most incontestable truths in the whole Body of Morality. Look at one of your industrious fellows for a moment, I beseech you. He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest and

receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return. Either he absents himself entirely from all fellowship, and lives a recluse in a garret, with carpet slippers and a leaden inkpot; or he comes among people swiftly and bitterly, in a contraction of his whole nervous system, to discharge some temper before he returns to work. I do not care how much or how well he works, this fellow is an evil creature in other people's lives. They would be happier if he were dead. They could easier do without his services in the Circumlocution Office than they can tolerate his fractious spirits. He poisons life at the well-head. It is better to be beggared out of hand by a scapegrace nephew than daily hag-ridden by a peevish uncle.

And what, in God's name, is all this pother about? For what cause do they embitter their own and other people's lives? That a man should publish three or thirty articles a year, that he should finish or not finish his great allegorical picture, are questions of little interest to the world. The ranks of life are full; and, although a thousand fall, there are always some to go into the breach. When they told Joan of Arc she should be at home minding women's work, she answered there were plenty to spin and wash. And so even with your own rare gifts! When nature is "so careless of the single life," why should we coddle ourselves into the fancy that our own is of exceptional importance? Suppose Shakespeare had been knocked on the head some dark night in Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves, the world would have wagged on better or worse, the pitcher gone to the well, the scythe to the corn, and the student to his book; and no one been any the wiser of the loss. There are not many works extant, if you look the alternative all over, which are worth the price of a pound of tobacco to a man of limited means. This is a sobering reflection for the proudest of our earthly vanities. Even a tobacconist may, upon consideration, find no great cause for personal vainglory in the phrase; for, although tobacco is an admirable sedative, the qualities necessary for retailing it are neither rare nor precious in them-

selves. Alas and alas! you may take it how you will, but the services of no single individual are indispensable. Atlas was just a gentleman with a protracted nightmare! And yet you see merchants who go and labor themselves into a great fortune and thence into the bankruptcy court; scribblers who keep scribbling at little articles until their temper is a cross to all who come about them, as though Pharaoh should set the Israelites to make a pin instead of a pyramid; and fine young men who work themselves into a decline, and are driven off in a hearse with white plumes upon it. Would you not suppose these persons had been whispered, by the Master of the Ceremonies, the promise of some momentous destiny; and that this lukewarm bullet on which they play their farces was the bull's-eye and center point of all the universe? And yet it is not so. The ends for which they give away their priceless youth, for all they know, may be chimerical or hurtful; the glory and riches they expect may never come, or may find them indifferent; and they and the world they inhabit are so inconsiderable that the mind freezes at the thought.

CHAPTER IX

DESTRUCTIVE ARGUMENT

SUPPOSE you are explaining to a friend that Westerners are a better lot than Easterners—more honest, more hospitable—and your friend is listening, attentive and unquestioning. Then you proceed to say that the Westerner is more natural, and your friend's eyebrows begin to lift, his lips begin to curl in a skeptical smile, and he asks: "Who is more conventionally minded than the typical Westerner?" At that moment you assume a new attitude: you feel it necessary to overcome skepticism; you must support your broad statements by facts, and show that they are typical facts and not mere hand-picked exceptions to the rule. You have assumed a much more difficult task than exposition; you have begun to argue. In fact, so difficult is the task of overcoming skepticism that probably after five minutes of increasingly heated discussion, you mutter something about bees in the bonnet, and your friend retorts with something about bats in the belfry. Neither the bats nor the bees seem exactly relevant to a discussion about Western conventionality.

PROFITABLE ARGUMENT

Does argument ever come to anything? Must we all come to the same conclusion as Omar?

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about; but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

Let us at once admit that certain people on certain subjects are impervious to anything but an emotional cataclysm that blasts every settled conviction loose. Such folk, when they are old, are to be pitied, as sufferers from one of the worst accompaniments of senility; when they are young, they are to be pitied even more. Ossification of the joints is bad enough, but ossification of the brain at twenty is a tragedy.

But all people are not so set, at least not on all subjects. If one generation is not amenable to reason, the next may be. Bernard Shaw remarks: "Children nowadays think that spending nine years in school, old-age and widows' pensions, votes for women, and short-skirted ladies in Parliament or pleading in barristers' wigs in the courts, are part of the order of Nature, and always were and ever shall be; but their great-grandmothers would have set down anyone who told them that such things were coming as mad, and anyone who wanted them as wicked." What brought about these changes? One cause, and by no means the least, was argument. People who in their own day were called fanatics and visionaries had the courage of their convictions, and argued and argued and argued. And we benefit by their arguments.

One good reason, therefore, for arguing is that in the end it makes an impression, and if the argument is sound, the impression remains. There is another and better reason: we cannot help arguing. The only other

alternative is to let the opinions of others rule us from the cradle to the grave. The only issue is: shall we argue feebly and ineffectively or shall we argue clearly and cogently?

We should save ourselves much wasted breath if we recognized that some matters are not worth arguing, and that some modes of argument will inevitably defeat themselves. Some questions, such as questions of taste, proverbially offer no logical solution; nothing can ever prove that a lily is lovelier than a poppy, or that golf is a finer game to play than pingpong. Other problems are too vast or too subtle or too remote for adequate solution. Who can tell whether the Roman Church has done more for the subjection or the exaltation of woman, or whether a thousand years from now China will be the greatest nation in the world? It is fatuous to debate loosely worded assertions such as: The President is a politician; or, Salesmanship is the curse of the age. Not only is it essential to profitable argument that the question be debatable, both in substance and wording, but it is also essential that the participants respect their own integrity and intelligence. The sophist, who deliberately employs the hundred and one ways of making the worse appear the better reason, may fool the mob, but he is quickly recognized by intelligent men for what he is: a crook with whom it is dangerous to meddle. On the other hand, there are few keener pleasures than discussion between honest, open-minded, well-informed men and women. Out of such argument issues that approximate truth which is the surest guide we have to social progress. Finally, argument is futile without psychological

adaptation to one's hearers or readers. Never make them the objects of ridicule or invective. When addressing a neutral or favorable audience, one may strengthen his position by a blasting attack on the opposite side. But the opposite side merely returns gas shell for gas shell. By failing to allow for the feelings of others, one hurts his own cause. Opponents are converted only by "sweet reasonableness," good-humored jesting, and the patient massing of evidence. The intellectual condition of profitable discussion, then, is an arguable topic; the emotional conditions are honesty and consideration for the feelings of others.

THE REFUTATION OF FALLACIES

Arguing is generally divided into two processes which may be called proof and refutation, or proving and disproving, or constructive and destructive argument. We shall begin with the latter type and devote to it the present chapter. This order of procedure has the triple advantage that we are beginning with the easier type of work, that we can find a good deal of amusement in exposing error, and that we are less likely to commit errors ourselves if we have caught and castigated them in others. In fact, the man or woman who has reached the point where he is alert to the mistakes of others and of himself, can recognize them and refute them effectively, has gone a long way toward making himself a respectable thinker and a valuable citizen.

Refutation has to do with two general sources of error: fallacious reasoning and unreliable testimony.

Only the result of fallacious reasoning is a fallacy. The result of unreliable testimony may be a false statement but it is not, strictly speaking, a fallacy. If Jack is the biggest spender in the class, it is false testimony to assert that he is close-fisted, but it is not a fallacy, for no reason has been given and no reasoning is involved. But if an absurd reason is given for the charge against Jack, if, for example, it is alleged that Jack is close-fisted because he refused to contribute to the fund for impoverished athletic coaches, then we have a fallacy. For the reasoning is fallacious. Keep clear this distinction between the two sources of error, and remember: not all false statements have their origin in fallacy.

The method to follow in writing the refutation of a single point is this: (1) Isolate and sum up concisely the argument to be refuted. Be very careful not to misrepresent by exaggeration or omission. Use the original words and phrases if possible. (2) Choose the method or methods of refutation that most effectively dispose of the argument. If there are more than one, arrange them in climactic order so that the strongest blow will come at the end. (3) Adapt your tone to your readers. If they are likely to be sensitive, be courteous and tactful, but none the less firm. (4) Even though you are severe or sarcastic, be scrupulously fair. Do not fall yourself into any of the traps of crude logic or make statements or charges that you cannot support to the letter. (5) Remember that one of the most effective ways of disposing of a fallacy is to point to a more obvious illustration of the same fallacy. For instance, if it is argued that those who believe in a re-

duction of the navy cannot be consistent unless they reduce it to nothing at all, one might answer: "If this argument proves anything, it also proves that every man who wants a lower tariff must necessarily want no tariff at all: every man who wants less rain wants no rain at all: every man who wants only one wife wants no wife at all." (6) Always round off the refutation clearly and strongly.

Let us now turn to the various classes of error, and study them each in turn. It should be noted that the same error may be placed in more than one class.

1. The Fallacy of Loose Terms

We have already had ample warning that language is a defective instrument for the expression of exact thought. Yet it is with precisely this instrument that the discussion of the most vital questions of human happiness and welfare has to be carried on. Politics, religion, economics, art, morality, national policy, suffer not only from the fact that they cannot be discussed without strong feeling, but also from the fact that they cannot be discussed without the use of terms that wobble and twist and snap in our hands. Every time we argue a subject that most intimately affects our happiness we are like those unfortunate billiard sharps, imagined by W. S. Gilbert, who were condemned to play

On a cloth untrue
With a twisted cue
And elliptical billiard balls.

In a situation like this the possibilities of the fallacy of loose terms are, of course, enormous. In fact, it is impossible to be so exact in one's speech and writing as to avoid altogether the chance of such errors. Nevertheless, we are all capable of attaching fairly definite senses to important words, and of using them consistently. And we can all derive a just satisfaction from catching others using words without any notion of what they mean and of pointing out how they use the same word to cover different meanings and so come to false conclusions.

The fallacy of loose terms arises whenever it is assumed that what is true when a word is used in one sense is also true when it is used in another sense. The shift in meaning goes unnoticed, and so the arguer fools his readers and often fools himself. So little do most people realize the shifting nature of words that they are constantly the victims of their own fallacies.

One of the most notorious instances of the fallacy of loose terms was the application of the biological phrase, "the survival of the fittest," to the struggle for existence in modern industry. Spencer, who invented the phrase, merely meant that those organisms which survived in a hostile environment were fittest to survive by reason of any peculiarity whatsoever, admirable or loathsome. The fitness might consist in a hard skull, a strong herd instinct, a poisonous sting, or a tendency to have ten thousand offspring. The fallacy arose, therefore, when the word "fittest," taken over into human society, naturally but wrongly suggested a certain moral or intellectual eminence. Thus this word so innocently used by Spencer furnished a

specious justification for all the horrors of cut-throat competition in business and industry.

Nicknames are among the commonest of loose terms. To quote Hazlitt:

Facts present a tangible and definite idea to the mind. . . . But a nickname is tied down to no such limited service, and there is no end to the abuse to which it is liable but the cunning of those who employ or the credulity of those who are gulled by it. . . . If you bring specific charges against a man, you thereby enable him to meet and repel them, if he thinks it worth his while; but a nickname baffles reply by the very vagueness of the inferences from it, and gives increased activity to the confused, dim, and imperfect notions of dislike connected with it. . . . The Mussulman calls the worshipper of the Cross "Christian dog," spits in his face, and kicks him from the pavement, by virtue of a nickname; and the Christian retorts the indignity upon the Infidel and the Jew by the same infallible rule of right. In France they damn Shakespeare in the lump, by calling him a *barbare*; and we talk of Racine's *verbiage* with inexpressible contempt and self-complacency. . . . Nature, it is said, has given arms to all creatures the most proper to defend themselves and annoy others; to the lowest she has given the use of nicknames.

President Conant of Harvard has recently said much the same thing:

There is a great danger that at times of crisis like the present we shall disappear under a welter of words used in a perfectly meaningless manner: psychology, integration, relativity, complexes, vitamins, service—you have all heard them. If you call everyone who stands to the right of you a Bourbon and everyone who stands to the left a Communist, you are contributing your bit to the confusion and deserve no better fate than to be yourself played upon by those who parade all manner of slogans and catchwords.

When a word means something definite and you have facts to show that it applies, you have a right to apply it as often as you like. Call a man a "Methodist," a "mesmerist," a "polyglot," or a "polygamist," and every well-informed person knows what you mean; if there is any doubt of the fact, he can ask for proof. But call a man a "Puritan" or an "agitator"; call a woman a "pacifist" or an "old maid," and you are doing something very different. You are using words that are more than half innuendo. Consciously or unconsciously, you are taking advantage of the looseness of the term to beget unfounded, or at least unprovable, suspicions. That is neither honorable conduct nor good logic.

How can one reply effectively to the fallacy of loose terms? In oral discussion, of course, the easiest move is to ask for a definition of the ambiguous word, and to pursue that definition till there is not an obscurity left, or until you have convicted your opponent of using words of which he does not know the meaning. If he cannot explain what he means by his own word, the presumption is that he does not know what he means. This method of handling vague terms is known as the Socratic method, and those who would practise the art should study the master of it, Socrates. It is mainly adapted to oral discussion and debate, but Shaw illustrates its use in written argument when he challenges those who accuse socialists of attacking marriage to specify what particular kind of marriage they mean.

Shaw follows this up by a second method of meeting the fallacy of loose terms, that of pointing out the various senses of a word. Thus Shaw enumerates

the many forms which the institution of marriage takes. Dean Inge replies to the indictment that Christianity has failed by pointing out that Christianity is a word capable of at least two constructions: the pure principles of the Gospels, or the behavior of nominal Christians. James Harvey Robinson refutes an argument of the Fundamentalists by pointing out two possible meanings in a word:

Recently a serious misunderstanding has resulted from the report that men of science are giving up "Darwinism"; that "Darwinism is dead." This has puzzled those who suppose that evolution was a well-substantiated assumption, and has filled with a somewhat malicious joy those who have always denounced the notion as wicked and opposed to Scripture.

To the public Darwinism means evolution, man's monkey origin, as the matter is popularly but inexactly phrased. But to the paleontologist and the biologist Darwinism does not mean the theory of man's animal descent, which was formulated long before the publication of the *Origin of Species*. To them it means the ingenious theories which Darwin so patiently worked out to account for the facts of evolution. The statement that Darwinism is dead does not imply that the evidence for the evolutionary hypothesis has in any way been weakened or that any really competent man of science doubts our animal derivation. It only means that Darwin's explanations of how one species may have been derived from another have proved, as a result of increasing knowledge, to be mistaken or inadequate. It means that we cannot any longer assign the importance he did to sexual and natural selection and the hereditary transmissibility of acquired characters.

But the confessed failure so far of biologists to clear up the process of evolution, or experimentally to create a new species from an existing one, does not affect the facts, de-

rived from many converging sources, which lead to the unavoidable conclusion that man has a genealogical relation to the higher animals.*

In similar fashion it is possible to deal with other loose words. For example, one can show that nicknames such as "highbrow," "knocker," "idealist," "Catholic," have more than one sense, and are not necessarily condemnatory, are even capable of a highly complimentary interpretation.

A third method of meeting the fallacy of loose terms is to take such a term and show that if used generally as your opponent uses it, it will lead to absurd results. An excellent example of this method was furnished by William Hard during the Great War:

What is a traitor? A traitor, I gather from usage, is a person who goes counter to the will of his country in war. That usage is decisive. It gives the word its color and its scope, fixed. La Follette, Hillquit, thousands of others, are going counter to the will of their country in war. They are traitors. They are called so every day, multitudinously. Very well, they are traitors. But what does this prove about their merits? Nothing. The most manifest facts of universally known history show that it proves nothing.

Let us remind ourselves for a moment, for instance, of our school days' friend, Robert Fitzwalter. An Englishman, he went to France and persuaded a French army to invade England. He offered the crown of England to a son of the French king. He helped the son of the French king to capture London. So did a large number of other Englishmen. They had refused to pay taxes for a war against France. They had refused to give their persons to a war against France. Instead of fighting the French king, they fought the English king. They came upon him at a certain place be-

* From J. H. Robinson, *The Humanizing of Knowledge*. Doubleday, Doran & Company.

tween Staines and Windsor. The name of that place, let us remind ourselves, was Runnymede. What they got there, what they went there to get, is called, even today, Magna Carta. They got it in course of refusing to support a foreign war and they retained it by calling in a foreign foe. Were they traitors? Manifestly. And they established by treason, and only by treason, the most gripping of all precedents of civil and political liberty, first for the people of England and then for all peoples. . . .

It means nothing, then, we must admit, to say that a man is a traitor. We must say: He is a bad traitor, or: He is a good traitor. Fitzwalter was a good traitor. Who was a bad traitor? Well, a bad traitor would be a man whose treason was for a bad cause. Let us say, Robert E. Lee. He rebelled, and he rebelled in a bad cause. Robert E. Lee was a bad traitor. Was he? Not one person out of a hundred, reading these lines, but will flinch physically, from any such set of words about Lee. Lee bad? We have stationed him, in metal, on his horse, on the soil of Pennsylvania, on the field of Gettysburg; and he looks across the "wheatfield" at the ridge beyond, at Meade facing him on it, still; and we all go, Northerners and Southerners, and bow to both; and there are more of us, even of the North, who are touched in our hearts for Lee. He was a supremely good man. He was, we would have to say, a good bad traitor. . . .

It becomes impossible, that word traitor. It covers so much. By usage, by apparently inextinguishable usage, it covers everything from Benedict Arnold to Jane Addams, from one of the most abominable to one of the most beautiful characters of our public history. It spreads itself now in a cloud over our whole land, obscuring everything, distorting everything. Looking through it at La Follette and Hillquit and the rest we miss the whole genuine reason for our opposition to them. We do not think them wrong, really, because they are going counter to their country's will. We have to admit that we know instance after instance of men who have gone counter to their country's will and whom we

approve and revere. We think these men wrong for a quite different reason. We think them wrong because, in our judgment, they are going counter to world-right and giving their aid to world-wrong. . . . But to prove them wrong in that way, to their neighbors, might often take a little time, a little toil. So, in exasperation, we try to choke the speech out of their throats, instantly, indiscriminately, with the fiat of a parish of the world, with a traitor's halter.*

This third method of exposing the misuse of an ambiguous term is the most effective. It may be used alone or used as a climax to other methods.

EXERCISES

1. Point out the loose terminology in the following arguments:

a. That Mrs. Parsons is always sending her money out of the country. She contributes to Chinese missions and famine funds, and all the rugs in her house are Chinese. I call it downright un-American.

b. Look at all the colleges, universities, and schools in this country that are exempt from taxation. But a great educational institution like the moving picture industry is bled white by taxation. Is it fair?

c. Oxford students must be very undemocratic. I am told that every room has two doors into the hallway, and when a student wishes to work, he shuts them both. Other students, when they find the outer door closed, slink away. When will Oxford university become democratized?

d. It is absurd in this country to talk about the idle rich. Nine-tenths of the richest people are busy from ten in the morning till midnight or after.

2. Write a theme using the second method of refutation upon one of the fallacies enumerated in Exercise 1.

* From *The New Republic*.

3. Write a theme using the third method of refutation upon one of the fallacies enumerated in Exercise 1.

4. Select from reading a newspaper or from conversation an illustration of fallacy based on an ambiguous word. State it clearly and refute it vigorously in a theme of 250 or 300 words.

2. The Fallacy of General Assumption

As we do our everyday thinking, we constantly invoke certain general principles, laws, axioms, inferences from experience. You discover you have a fever and promptly send for the doctor. What general assumptions are involved? Fever is always a signal of danger. It is always best to send for a doctor. A salesman wants to sell you a stock which will pay 50% dividends, and you decide not to buy. What general assumption is involved? Stocks which are likely to pay 50% dividends never have to beg for buyers. These are all examples of sound general assumption. But you also act on assumptions that are questionable. You see at the drugstore two brands of soap, and you buy the brand that is nationally advertised in preference to the obscure brand. Is the assumption that all nationally advertised goods are superior to the unadvertised valid? You condemn a strike because you have heard that all strikes are "caused by foreign communists who are trying to knock out American idealism." Is this reality or rumor?

Often the general assumption is not completely expressed but is merely implied; it is therefore more difficult to perceive and refute. "We can't help winning this game; why, we've won every game this season."

What is the general assumption here? Victory is always assured to a team which has been previously victorious. Again: "Italy is justified in her aggressive policy, for her territory is too small for her population." What general principle is implied here? All nations which suffer from over-population are justified in seizing territory from weaker nations. "My college education is not worth much; the highest salaried men in this factory most of them never saw a sheepskin except on a sheep's back." There are several flaws in this logic, but one obvious flaw is the general assumption that the worth of a college education can be measured always in terms of dollars and cents.

The fallacy of general assumption consists of asserting or implying a general rule, applicable to all cases of a given kind, when that rule may be questioned or denied.

EXERCISES

State explicitly the general assumptions implied in the following arguments. Note that a general rule should include some comprehensive word such as "all," "every," "always," "in every case," "never," "no."

a. He cannot be a good teacher, because he is not popular with the students.

b. Prunella has not written a word to thank me for the birthday present I sent her. She must be an ungrateful creature.

c. How absurd those old alchemists were to think they could ever produce gold from another metal! They never realized that gold is an element.

d. Do not go out without your rubbers in this rain, or you will catch cold.

e. Browning was a profound thinker, for only long and serious study will reveal his meaning.

There are three ways of meeting the fallacy of general assumption, and they closely resemble the three ways of meeting the fallacy of loose terms.

The first method is to state the general assumption and challenge it as doubtful, unproved. Until it is proved, no conclusion can follow; the argument hangs in the air. The assumption may be true or may not be true, but until it is supported in some way, nothing is proved. There is no argument, only a suggestion of what might be an argument. Someone is urging the alumni to vote for Colonel Bembridge for trustee, because he made a fine record in the World War and has been a great success as a lumber dealer. An effective reply would be: "What are the implied general assumptions? A fine war record always qualifies a man as an expert in educational policy. Success as a lumber dealer is always a criterion of a man's fitness to deal with the problems of young men. Are these general principles so obviously true that they command our assent without question or challenge? Maybe they are true, maybe they are not true. But I am not yet convinced that handling a regiment or a lumberyard is the best qualification for understanding the education of youth. And until then, I shall not vote for Colonel Bembridge."

The second method goes a good deal further. It shows that the assumption goes contrary to known facts or acknowledged principles. There is the antediluvian argument about war; you have all heard it:

"What is the use of trying to get rid of war? You cannot change human nature." Here is an answer to this general assumption by the second method. Professor Stratton of the University of California writes:

Is it true or is it not true that our increasing knowledge of the human mind shows that human nature will always require nations to settle their disputes by physical violence rather than by law and its more orderly methods? The true answer to this is worth untiring research. . . .

Would you be willing to go with me, not back to the cave man, but to what has occurred in comparatively recent times—in Mexico, in the islands of the Pacific and in Africa? In these and in other places, it was customary to sacrifice living men upon the altar of some powerful supernatural being. To obtain the creatures for such sacrifices was often one of the aims of war. And beyond this it was thought, that the divine wrath could be appeased, not by sacrificing war prisoners only but by sacrificing the life of one's own son or daughter, by thus offering something still more precious to the worshipper and to his god.

We can imagine the opposition to those who in due time wished to do away with this ghastly institution. "What!" others must have said, "would you change human nature? Do you expect men to give up their very religion? Would you have us refuse to offer to our divinity the most precious things we have?" And yet in spite of such misgivings human sacrifice in all civilized regions has gone forever, and without altering a single one of the deep motives which supported it. . . .

Slavery's hold upon man has been from earliest times. The enslavement of others has marked the leading peoples of the world. Civilization itself has seemed impossible without it. Only yesterday the living bodies of men and women were bought and sold even in our own land. What deep psychological roots slavery had! It drew its strength from the acquisitive impulse—from the desire for wealth, for

property. . . . Slavery was protected by all the intellectual and emotional defenses of those who owned slaves. It seemed as though the laws of nature, of society, and of God not only supported but required this institution; and as if the men who worked to abolish slavery had no acquaintance with the human mind, with what is possible to human nature. But when the time came for Lincoln to sign the great Proclamation, did he by as much as a jot or tittle have to annul the laws of human nature itself? No. Men continued as before to be avaricious. They still are ready to use other men for their own interests. They still are ready to believe that what they deeply desire is also deeply right. But society has fixed new limits to the ways in which men can gratify their impulses to acquire wealth, and to control their fellows, and to seek leisure and luxury. . . .

We cannot doubt that humanity will keep the great impulses which still lead to war—among which is the love of wealth, the love of adventure, the love of honor, the love of mother country. Yet there can be a growing impatience, a growing abhorrence of satisfying these great impulses by the old and bloody methods. Nor is there in the science of psychology anything to assure us that in this one region no farther advance is possible; to assure us that here men have reached the last limit of their inventiveness; that they can institute no shrewder and more satisfying devices to express their devotion to their nation's life and to the life of the world.*

A peculiarly effective form of this second method consists in showing that the general assumption goes contrary to other principles of the man who uses it or contrary to his practice. In other words, it amounts to the exposure of his inconsistency. It is a powerful weapon, and if pressed with sufficient vigor will lay your opponent prostrate, even though it does not

* From *The Scientific Monthly*.

necessarily settle the question on its merits. But precisely because it is so personal a method of attack it should be used with great discretion if you wish to include your adversary among your converts. Here is an illustration of its use, written by J. B. S. Haldane, the English biochemist:

There are a few honest anti-vivisectionists. They are, of course, vegetarians; for the painless killing of animals for physiology is no more reprehensible than their killing for meat. They wear canvas shoes, cotton or woolen gloves and artificial pearls, if any. They refuse to sit on leather-covered chairs, or to wear horn-rimmed spectacles. They do not spray their roses, or employ Keating's powder even under the gravest provocation. I have not met any of them, but I am quite prepared to believe that they exist. No one who does not come up to this rather exacting standard can logically demand the total abolition of vivisection. But logic is not the strongest point of the enemies of science. All others who demand the prohibition of experiments on anæsthetized animals are quite definitely hypocrites, engaged in the familiar pursuit of

Compounding sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to.*

EXERCISES

1. Write a paragraph of 150 to 250 words exposing the inconsistency of one of the following positions:

a. Supporting the Bolshevik régime in Russia and at the same time demanding freedom of speech and press in the United States.

b. Declaring that the government should keep its hands off business and at the same time calling for the imposition of a high tariff.

* From J. B. S. Haldane, *Possible Worlds*. Harper & Brothers.

c. Urging greater authority for student government, and at the same time blaming the faculty for not restricting the overdevelopment of student activities.

d. Asserting the right of every American citizen to equality of opportunity, and at the same time supporting the right of inheritance.

e. Supporting intercollegiate athletics on the ground that they make for healthy student morals, and at the same time defending betting at the games.

f. Believing in individualism and patriotism.

2. The same as Exercise 1, except that you select for refutation an example of inconsistency from your own reading or observation.

A third method of meeting a doubtful general assumption is to reduce it to an absurdity by accepting it and following it to its logical conclusion. It is the method known in geometry as the *reductio ad absurdum*. Norman Angell, dealing with the general assumption that human nature never changes, remarks drily: "That, of course, is why we now eat our enemies, enslave their children, examine witnesses with the thumbscrew, and burn those who do not attend the same church." Chesterton employs much the same method in one of his essays:

It is a platitude, and none the less true for that, that we need to have an ideal in our minds with which to test all realities. But it is equally true, and less noted, that we need a reality with which to test ideals. Thus I have selected Mrs. Buttons, a charwoman in Battersea, as the touchstone of all modern theories about the mass of women. Her name is not Buttons; she is not in the least contemptible, nor entirely a comic figure. She has a powerful stoop, and an ugly attractive face, a little like that of Huxley—without the whiskers,

of course. The courage with which she supports the most brutal bad luck has something quite creepy about it. Her irony is incessant and inventive; her practical charity very large; and she is wholly unaware of the philosophical use to which I put her.

But when I hear the modern generalizations about her sex on all sides I simply substitute her name, and see how the thing sounds then. When on the one side the mere sentimentalist says, "Let women be content to be dainty and exquisite, a protected piece of social art and domestic ornament," then I merely repeat it to myself in the other form, "Let Mrs. Buttons be content to be dainty and exquisite, a protected piece of social art, etc." It is extraordinary what a difference the substitution seems to make. And on the other hand, when some of the suffragettes say in their pamphlets and speeches, "Woman, leaping to life at the trumpet call of Ibsen and Shaw, drops her tawdry luxuries and demands to grasp the sceptre of empire and the firebrand of speculative thought," in order to understand such a sentence I say it over again in the amended form: "Mrs. Buttons, leaping to life at the trumpet call of Ibsen and Shaw, drops her tawdry luxuries and demands to grasp the sceptre of empire and the firebrand of speculative thought." Somehow it sounds quite different. And yet when you say Woman I suppose you mean the average woman; and if most women are as capable and critical and morally sound as Mrs. Buttons, it is as much as we can expect, and a great deal more than we deserve.*

EXERCISE

Write a theme of 300 words refuting, by either the second or third method or by both, one of the examples of false assumption already given in a previous exercise, or one of the following:

a. "Criticizing the Constitution of the United States, are you? You deserve to be shipped back to where you came from."

* From G. K. Chesterton, *Alarms and Discursions*. Dodd, Mead & Company.

b. We are the intellectual superiors of the Greeks because any college graduate could correct many statements in the works of Aristotle.

c. What does it matter if the evidence on which Mooney was imprisoned was "cooked"? He should have been kept in jail anyway.

d. The working class ought not to be paid higher wages, for they would only spend the difference on silk shirts and gasoline.

3. *The Fallacy of Dodging the Issue*

Dodging the issue means avoiding a clear-cut decision on a question by raising an irrelevant point.

One of the commonest experiences of anyone who argues persistently in a good cause is to find that, just as he is about to drive home his point, his adversary has shifted his ground and brought up another issue. When you make things uncomfortable for him in his new position and are about to deal him a swinging blow, he ducks and is presently thumbing his nose at you from another position. Finally he—and you—are back where you started from, and nothing has been gained. Now this may be good tactics in guerilla warfare, but in gentlemanly argument, where presumably the object of both sides is to establish what can be established and to abandon what cannot be established, it is a sheer waste of time.

It is, of course, just as easy to dodge the issue in written argument, and the process takes many forms. Some of the most familiar are these: to assume that an opinion cannot be sound if its advocates betray any human weaknesses; to argue that an opinion must be

true because it is very ancient; to argue as if those who do not want something on a large scale do not want it at all; to argue that a theory cannot be true because it is unpleasant; to discredit a bill by showing that its proponents had something to gain by it. It is dodging the issue to attack Roman Catholicism on the ground that a few monks and nuns have been known to indulge common human propensities. It is dodging the issue to condemn certain students who distributed a circular in favor of strikers, not on the ground that the strikers were wrong or that the students were exceeding their rights, but because alumni three thousand miles away were worried. It is dodging the issue to argue that you deserve a higher grade in a course because you have never been absent from class. It is dodging the issue to select some minor mistake of your opponent's, batter it to pieces, and crow as if you had destroyed your opponent's case. But commonest of all forms of dodging the issue is to reply to a criticism of your own hat or country or God by a criticism of your critic's hat or country or God. If your dentist tells you that you have pyorrhea, it is dodging the issue to bring forward testimony that he is suffering from halitosis. In all these instances the point brought up has been irrelevant to the point at issue.

In dealing with irrelevant arguments the proverbial ounce of prevention should not be neglected. See that the proposition itself is clear, and do your part to see that the main points that prove or disprove it are equally clear. Enumerate them. Then irrelevant matters can be detected and eliminated far more easily

than if both parties know only vaguely that they are arguing "about farm relief," or "about Oriental art."

If the fallacy of dodging the issue then comes up, there is only one way of dealing with it. Recall clearly the question under debate, and point out how little bearing the present consideration has on it, perhaps contrasting the irrelevant consideration with the considerations which would really settle the question. Here is a good example of the method from Macaulay:

The advocates of Charles, like the advocates of other malefactors against whom overwhelming evidence is produced, generally decline all controversy about the facts, and content themselves with calling testimony to character. He had so many private virtues! And had James the Second no private virtues? Was Oliver Cromwell, his bitterest enemies themselves being judges, destitute of private virtues? And what, after all, are the virtues ascribed to Charles? A religious zeal, not more sincere than that of his son, and fully as weak and narrow-minded, and a few of the ordinary household decencies which half the tombstones in England claim for those who lie beneath them. A good father! A good husband! Ample apologies indeed for fifteen years of persecution, tyranny, and falsehood!

Theodore Roosevelt pointed out that the merits of a measure are not decided by the political complexion of its advocates:

Today we find conservatives objecting to some piece of wise legislation because it is demanded by the socialists, and radicals objecting to some piece of wise legislation of another kind, because it is looked upon favorably by Wall Street. In Lincoln's words we must be allowed good-humoredly to say that both attitudes are very silly—equally so whether we always oppose the socialists or always oppose

Wall Street. In one case we uphold what the socialists demand, in the other case what Wall Street favors. In Lincoln's words, "What of it? We are still right. In both cases we are right." *

EXERCISE

Refute in a theme of 200 words one of the following instances of dodging the issue:

a. It has been argued as a precedent for socialism that the early Christians practised communism and that Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead because they refused to contribute their share to the common stock. That argument is false: Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead, as every one knows, not because they refused to contribute to the common stock but because they lied.

b. Professor X should have known better than to fail Shorty Callahan. Why, he is the star of the varsity show.

c. Ford deserves to be president of the United States. Is there any man in this country who has done more for the comfort of the farmer and the working man, who has shown more organizing ability and mechanical ingenuity?

d. Professor, don't you think I deserve a higher grade on this composition? I worked five hours on it.

e. Italy had a right to conquer Abyssinia because the nations who condemned her had done the same sort of thing.

f. Materialism is a depressing doctrine. To believe that we are nothing more than so many peculiar conglomerations of energized atoms, without a suspicion of a soul! A doctrine so repugnant to all our feelings cannot be true.

g. Professor Forel argues that conscience is a highly variable guide, differing vastly in the intensity and the tenor of its teachings, and is therefore unreliable. Chesterton replies as follows: "The first argument is that man has no conscience because some men are quite mad, and therefore not particularly conscientious. And the second argument is

* From T. Roosevelt, *Foes of Our Own Honor*. Doubleday, Doran & Company.

that man has no conscience because some men are more conscientious than others. And the third is that man has no conscience because conscientious men in different countries and quite different circumstances often do very different things. Professor Forel applies these arguments eloquently to the question of human consciences; and I really cannot see why I cannot apply them to the question of human noses. Man has no nose because now and then a man has no nose—I believe that Sir William Davenant, the poet, had no nose. Man has no nose because some noses are longer than others or can smell better than others. Man has no nose because not only are noses of different shapes, but (oh, piercing sword of scepticism!) some men use their noses and find the smell of incense nice, while some use their noses and find it nasty. Science therefore declares that man is normally noseless; and will take this for granted for the next four or five hundred pages, and will treat all the alleged noses of history as the quaint legends of a credulous age."

4. *The Fallacy of Ignoring Alternatives*

Another common source of wrong opinions is the habit of concentrating attention on only one alternative or only a part of the alternatives in a given situation and thus ignoring the merits or demerits of other alternatives. The man who opposes on principle all medical experiments on animals because of the pain sometimes inflicted upon the rats, guinea pigs, monkeys, and dogs, usually ignores completely the consequences of the alternative—a death sentence upon all those men, women, and children who owe their lives to discoveries in physiology and the use of serums. He sees only the suffering produced by one course of action; he fails completely to see the suffering which

would be produced by following the only other alternative. A professor argues that his course should be required of all students because, though it may be of no practical use to most of them and gives them neither pleasure nor a deeper understanding of life, it does offer a disciplinary training in accuracy and system. It is a good argument so far as it goes; accuracy and system are things we all need to learn. But what alternative does the professor ignore? The possibility that there may be other courses, equally valuable as discipline, which also supply useful knowledge or æsthetic pleasure or insight into the nature of man and his place in the universe. When confronted with these alternatives, a merely disciplinary course has to yield. The fallacy of ignoring alternatives often assumes that the remedy for a situation lies in either one of two extremes, and ignores the old Greek doctrine of the Golden Mean. The anchorite, finding the world full of evil, decided that he must cut himself off completely from the world if he was to escape the evil. With much the same naïveté a suppressed flapper, having discovered that a cigaret will not asphyxiate nor a cocktail kill, proclaims for a life of license. She has to learn from experience the fallacy of ignoring the Golden Mean. The idealistic anarchist, convinced, rightly enough, that every government known to man has been corrupt and unjust, leaps to the fantastic conclusion that the only alternative is to abolish every form of government. It would seem as if the minds of some people were constructed like pendulums; they only swing from one extreme to another and never find a resting place between.

A rejoinder to the fallacy of ignoring alternatives may consist of one or two parts. First, you may point out that one or more alternatives have not been considered, so that the consequences need not follow. Secondly, you may, if you can, point out that one of these alternatives solves the problem, meets the conditions better than any of those considered, and therefore the consequences cannot follow.

EXERCISE

Write a theme refuting as completely and strongly as you can one of the following instances of ignoring alternatives :

a. Medical science has demonstrated that meat is responsible for many of our ailments. Therefore, all sensible people ought to be vegetarians.

b. Do not vote for high taxes on large incomes, because it is an outrage to "soak the rich."

c. The Bible is either the literal truth told by honest men, or it is a fraudulent imposture concocted by designing men. But error can be detected in it from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation. What then can we think of the men who composed it but class them with those who pass counterfeit coin for true?

d. It has been demonstrated over and over again that faith in Christ can heal diseases. Go to Lourdes or Zion City or to the Mother Church of Christian Science in Boston, and you will be shown the crutches, the trusses, the boluses thrown away by invalids who had been declared incurable by doctors but were cured by prayer. Such is the power of religion to heal bodies as well as souls.

e. Abolish intercollegiate football? What else will bring ninety per cent of the whole undergraduate body out every Saturday afternoon, to fill their lungs with the cool, fresh autumn air, to shout and dance in healthy excitement, to learn what physical heroism and devotion to Alma Mater

mean? When intercollegiate football goes, you will have, instead of a lot of red-blooded rooters, nothing but pale, anæmic loafers and grinds.

5. *The Fallacy of False Analogy*

To reason from analogy is to reason that because two things resemble each other in one or more known respects they will resemble each other in some other respect. *We have a false analogy when the points of resemblance do not affect sufficiently or at all the point in dispute.* A student argues that because he has passed the first semester of a course, he will also pass the second. He knows that the two halves of the course resemble each other in certain known respects—the nature of the subject, the standards of the instructor—and he assumes that since the two halves resemble each other in these important respects, they will resemble each other in the uncertain matter—the degree of success he will have in meeting the requirements of the instructor. A dictator informs the world that if a sea-captain takes orders from the crew, the ship will go on the rocks; therefore, democratic control of government is not practical. The Tories will applaud the argument; but saner folk will ask not only what esoteric sense is attached to the word *practical* that it should not apply to the democratic governments of England and the United States, but also whether the Vessel of State corresponds precisely to a vessel of steel, the government to a captain, the people to a crew.

The cogency of all analogy depends, therefore, on

whether the known points of resemblance necessarily lead to or imply a resemblance in a point unknown or uncertain.

One method of attacking the argument from analogy is to show that the points of resemblance are merely assumed or are merely superficial. If Jane argues that because she has rid herself of headaches by taking plenty of fresh air and exercise, Janet's headaches will respond to the same cure, the analogy is worthless. The resemblance in the names of the two girls is utterly superficial; whereas a resemblance in their physical constitution, which alone would affect the case, has not been proved but merely taken for granted. Until a fundamental resemblance is proved, Jane's cure will not necessarily help Janet's headaches.

A second method is to push the matter further, and to indicate certain points of difference that outweigh whatever similarity exists. This definitely destroys the force of the analogy. For instance, the author of a communication to *The New York Times* attacks thus the old argument that men's souls are immortal because the life of trees and plants is renewed in the spring.

In regard to the yearly rebirth of vegetation as we know it, it is not apparent to me just how this proves immortality. Vegetation is merely dormant, not dead, after its productive season. Any vegetation that is pronounced dead surely does not reappear in bloom the next season.

Sometimes it is possible to deal the *coup de grace* to a false analogy by bringing forward a sound analogy

and showing that it leads to an entirely different conclusion, as in the following illustration:

In an American court a suit for damages was brought against a railroad company which had refused a ticket reading "From A to B" on the ground that the passenger was traveling from B to A. The attorney for the railroad argued that the passenger was really claiming a different service from that he had paid for. "He paid for a passage from A to B," he said, "and yet demands passage from B to A. He might as well buy a barrel of potatoes at a grocery, and then sue the grocer on the ground that he did not deliver apples instead." When the attorney for the plaintiff had opportunity to reply, he said: "The illustration drawn from the barrel of apples and the barrel of potatoes seems to be an unfortunate one for my friend on the other side. The present case would be better illustrated by a grocer, who, having sold a customer a barrel of apples, should insist that he should begin at the top and eat down, whereas the customer had a preference for beginning at the bottom and eating up." *

EXERCISE

Refute as effectively as you can one of these examples of false analogy:

a. Last week when I made fudge for the first time, it was a great success. So it must be all right this time.

b. Judson will make a "crackajack" hockey forward. Look at his brilliant play in soccer.

c. When the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company came to town fifteen years ago, they fell flat, and how can they expect anything else this winter?

d. All the more violent forms of athletics require physical courage; so does war. Athletics teaches discipline; so does war. Athletics requires quick thought; so does war. Athletics

* From R. M. Alden. *Art of Debate*. Henry Holt.

develops the will to win; so does war. If we approve athletics as a training for life, we must approve war.

e. Colleges nowadays acquire prestige with the public and increase their enrollment because of the success of their athletic teams. This is a good idea to apply to churches. Every church that has empty pews would do well to enter the field of athletic sport and thus make a name for itself.

f. Any business that does not show a clear profit at the end of the year is set down as a failure, or as an instance of mismanagement. Colleges seem to have a habit of showing a deficit and then dunning the alumni for funds to meet it. What better proof could we have of the inefficiency of college government?

g. Would you eat an unripe apple? Then why drink unripe ginger ale?

6. *The Fallacy of Hasty Generalization*

Generalization is a form of reasoning from specific facts to general law. *It argues that what is true in one or more cases must be true in all cases of the same kind.* It is the reasoning which often lies at the base of those broad statements which we have studied under general assumption. It is an extension of reasoning by analogy, which we have just studied; for whereas analogy merely attempts to prove that what is true of one case is true of another case of the same kind, generalization attempts to prove that it is true of all cases of the same kind. By analogy a person argues that if one widely advertised alkalizer is valueless, another similar remedy is worthless. By generalization he argues that all alkalizers are worthless.

What constitutes hasty generalization? There are two phrases in the definition of generalization which

suggest possible sources of weakness: "in one or more cases," and "of the same kind." Sometimes, of course, it is sheer lunacy to judge a class from a particular member, as, for instance, to judge all Russians by one Russian, or the general efficacy of a throat lozenge by one test, or the quality of the food at all Childs restaurants from one experience. Often ten or a hundred cases will not suffice to warrant a generalization. To infer that Napoleon was invincible because from Lodi to Wagram he suffered no defeats on land would have been a hasty generalization: at last he met his Moscow and his Waterloo. To infer that an experiment which has failed twenty-five times can never succeed may be rash. Many a man has found his pot of gold, not at the end of a rainbow, but at the bottom of a wastebasketful of rejected manuscripts or among the fragments of exploded retorts. Sometimes, however, one may generalize from a single example. A revolver which accommodates one cartridge will doubtless accommodate all similar cartridges. Often, however, it is necessary to take more than one instance, and to select them from different parts of the class of similar instances, before one can generalize securely. Do you wish to be certain that Jersey cattle give more cream than other kinds? You will not be satisfied with testing one Jersey, but you will test dozens of Jerseys under varying conditions of climate and feed before you will make up your mind. It will be a great day for humanity when it uses as much common sense about coming to broad conclusions on politics, economics, and religion as any up-to-date farmer uses in buying and feeding his hogs.

It is desirable, therefore, that when there are marked variations within the class to which the generalization is applied, there should be enough varied instances furnished to guarantee that the variations do not affect the soundness of the generalization. This will prove that, as in sound analogy, the points of similarity outweigh the points of difference.

It is, therefore, one method of attacking a generalization to point out that not enough instances have been cited or that the instances are not sufficiently representative of the variations within the class. Here is a caustic refutation by Professor Pitkin, exemplifying this method:

Biometrists and psychologists have been testing convicts by the thousands. They report feeble-mindedness, alcoholism, epilepsy, sexual profligacy, dementia præcox, and paresis in almost every cell. And where they do not find it in the cell, they find it in the ancestry of the inmate. . . . The conclusion is that practically all criminals are mental defectives. . . . I protest at the free-and-easy manner in which our criminologists draw panoramic conclusions about criminals from facts known about convicts. Are most criminals convicts? Or, if they are not, are convicts fairly typical of all criminals? Here we enter upon the crux of the matter. . . . There are six broad classes of criminals. [Here follows a classification of all those who break the law from the Great Unknowns to the habitual jailbirds.] How do these six classes fare with our criminologists who announce so glibly that all criminals are defectives? To put it conservatively, these estimable seekers of truth have never met and measured a single member of Class A, Class B, and Class C. They have measured in Class D only those who have been convicted in the criminal courts; they have never encountered those who have been discharged or acquitted there, nor those who

have deftly ducked into the civil courts. They have measured in Class E only those who have been convicted. But in Class F they have charted, graphed, psychoanalyzed, and generally reduced to writing and numbers every man-jack and woman-jill of them. What effect has all this upon their findings?

Simply this: They have proved that all "crooks" are "boobs" by measuring minutely all the "boobs" among the "crooks." What could be neater? In the same manner, you may demonstrate with Euclidean rigor that all Marathon runners are underweight, asthmatic, and knock-kneed by carefully selecting as specimens to measure all persons who have come in last in any race.*

The reliability of a generalization depends not only on the numbers considered and their distribution but also upon the existence of some fundamental similarity, some powerful cause or combination of causes behind all the instances, which can be counted on to produce the same results. Mr. Foster in his excellent book, *Argumentation and Debate*, says: "The ultimate warrant for a generalization is our belief in the universal laws of causation: nothing happens without sufficient cause." If every \$5 note issued by the government or by a national bank can be counted on to have the same purchasing power and does not drop to a fifth of its value overnight, it is because the note has behind it the same gold reserve and the same good faith. If these went, all generalizations regarding the value of a \$5 note in the purchase of commodities or in exchange would be worthless too.

This, then, is a second method of attacking a hasty generalization: to prove that there is no fundamental and unchanging likeness in all members of the class

* From *The Forum*.

which will guarantee the like result from all, or to prove that even if such a likeness exists, it is not strong enough to resist certain counteracting influences. For example, the argument that women are incapable of writing the plays of Shakespear might be refuted by pointing out that no one has yet demonstrated that there is anything in the female nature incompatible with dramatic and poetic power; or by pointing out, as Virginia Woolf has done, that the factors which have made a woman Shakespear impossible in the past may some day be rendered nugatory by enlarged opportunity and increased encouragement.

A third and crushing method of refuting a hasty generalization is to point out exceptions; for exceptions, according to the old adage, prove the rule, in the sense that they test it. A generalization is not sound unless it covers all or practically all members of a class. If anyone makes the rash statement that the G. O. P. is always the party of prosperity, then it is necessary only to mention the sad reign of Mr. Hoover. If some ardent Democrat maintains that his party is consistently the friend of the laboring classes, it is proper to depict the desperate straits of the sharecroppers of the South. Of course, the greater the number of exceptions which you can produce, the weaker the generalization; the more emphatically and clearly the exceptions are presented to the reader, the more complete is your triumph.

EXERCISES

1. Apply two methods of refutation to one of the examples of hasty generalization below :

a. My fiancé(e) has just broken his (her) engagement. That just shows how fickle men (women) are.

b. Paris is the most lascivious city in Europe. That is a good index of the low morality of the French.

c. Let's send a complete set of Mark Twain's works to the hospital. Dear Aunty was cured, I believe, by reading *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, and a whole set ought to do the sick folks lots of good.

d. Mr. ——— came to this country to analyze the American soul. He visited New York, Boston, Newport, Washington, Palm Beach, and Hollywood, and then wrote a book on *The Soul of Uncle Sam*. Read it if you want to understand the American character.

e. There are some nice-looking mushrooms growing. Let's broil them over the camp-fire. They are so delicious, and they never do me any harm.

f. The law is rotten with corruption. The Christian church is afraid to preach the doctrines of its master. Marriage is not all that it is "cracked up" to be. Advertising is one big bluff. Therefore, all the world's a sham.

2. Refute in 200 or 300 words an example of hasty generalization taken from conversation or reading.

7. *The Fallacies of Mistaken or Confused Cause*

The poet Lucretius once sang: "Happy is the man who knows the causes of things." A case of hasty generalization, one notes; and one thinks of a number of eminent scientists who do not seem as happy as the cook with her Book of Dreams and the congressman with his anti-evolution bill. Still, there are few pursuits more fascinating to the intelligent than the pursuit of causes; and there are few subjects more full of confusion. In fact, there are several different

pitfalls for the unwary, and we shall probably be able to detect them more clearly if we examine them one by one. The first is assuming a causal relation where none exists; the second is mistaking an effect for a cause; the third is ignoring all but one cause; the fourth is stopping short at superficial causes.

a. Assuming a Causal Relation

This form of fallacy, often called *Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc*, assumes that when one circumstance follows another circumstance one or more times, it is the result of the second circumstance, though, as a matter of fact, no causal relation exists. Most of our superstitions are examples of this fallacy, such as: spilling salt on the table brings bad luck; Friday the 13th is a fatal day to begin an enterprise; bubbles in the coffee are a sign of money. More imposing and deceptive are such arguments as this: An absolute monarchy produces literary genius, since the age of Augustus saw the flowering of Latin literature, the age of Elizabeth was the age of Shakespear, and the age of Louis XIV produced the French classic drama. Or this: The prayers of Dr. Rawson saved the lives of British soldiers at the front because many of them returned safe to their homes. Such causal inductions are plausible: they have convinced thousands of intelligent people. But they are open to refutation.

One method is to point out that many times the supposed cause has been present, but the effect has not appeared. Many a chicken has been broiled, many a class has been taught as successfully on Friday the

13th as on any other day. There have been hundreds of absolute monarchs for every one whose reign has been illustrious in literature. There were hundreds of soldiers for whom Dr. Rawson prayed who never came back alive. This form of refutation, however, is not always decisive because it is sometimes proper to reply that there were counteracting circumstances which prevented the cause from producing its normal effect. That the supposed cause has been highly irregular in its operation, is a point that is always worth making whenever possible, but it does not settle the matter.

A better method of refutation is to show that when the supposed cause is absent, or present in only a minor degree, the effect appears as clearly as ever. Thus the argument that absolute monarchy is the cause of literary genius of the highest order is completely shattered by showing that when Athens produced her greatest dramatists, she was not a monarchy at all, and that Dante was a citizen of the republic of Florence. The relation of genius to autocracy, therefore, is nil. This method of refuting a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* argument is conclusive if it can be proved that the elimination or the reduction of the supposed cause, though the situation remains otherwise the same, produces no effect on the result. In other words, test an assumed cause as you would test a man who says he is essential to the existence of his wife. See if his absence restricts her activities, reduces her vitality. If not, the claim is false; no causal connection exists.

EXERCISE

Write a theme of 200 words refuting as effectively as you can one of these fallacies. Invent imaginary facts for a or c:

a. Jespersion dined out five times this month and ate oysters with his dinner every time. Three times, after dining out, he was badly upset. It must have been the oysters.

b. War is the incubator of poetry. After the Persian wars came the great Greek dramas. After the victory over the Armada came Marlowe, Shakespear, and Ben Jonson. After the Napoleonic wars came Shelley, Byron, and Keats. After the World War comes T. S. Eliot.

c. There's a jinx about that fellow. He was in a bus the other day when it skidded and turned turtle. He was in a train a year ago when it hit an automobile and killed three people. And only yesterday he went into the bank, and sure enough, before midnight the bank was afire.

d. Most of the great men in American history have had no middle name. Such a name must for some inscrutable reason be a handicap.

b. Mistaking an Effect for a Cause

To mistake an effect for a cause would seem to be the blunder of a blockhead, but none of us escapes it. We are likely, for instance, to conclude that if 45% of the inmates of an insane asylum have been heavy drinkers, drink was the cause of their insanity. We are likely to overlook the possibility that both the drinking and the insanity are effects of some common cause, some nervous or mental weakness. It used to be thought that malaria was the result of the vapors rising from marshy country. Now we know that the

vapors were not the cause of malaria but merely a result of the marshes, like malaria itself, and that the immediate cause of malaria was a bacillus transmitted by mosquitoes which infested the marshes. The same confusion of effect and cause is often exemplified in arguments about some downtrodden element in the population. It is easy to think that they owe their status to their vices and stupidities; and that may be partially true. But we should not overlook the other possibility—that their vices and stupidities are due to their status.

There can be no cut-and-dried method of meeting such a confusion. Usually an intimate, somewhat technical knowledge of the subject is necessary. But sometimes it is possible, on common sense grounds, to question the logic and also to show that the supposed cause is really an effect.

EXERCISE

Expose in a theme of 200 words the fallacy in one of these arguments:

a. Of course, Sally is charming, but she is so vain that she is not contented with less than a dozen men around her. At every dance and party I see her surrounded by a crowd of men.

b. A cheerful philosophy is the primary cause of good health. All the cheerful, optimistic people I know have sound constitutions.

c. The old Greek conception of Nemesis, of a power that punishes the evildoer in this world, is sound. It is a marvel to see how surely in the long run the tyrant is cast down, the swindler is brought to justice, the murderer is murdered. Such is the work of that mysterious power which metes out to each man his deserts.

c. Ignoring All but One Cause

This, of course, is one form of the fallacy of ignoring alternatives, and is very common, for two reasons: we love to simplify, and we tend to ignore unwelcome facts. Inspired by one or both of these motives, gentlemen come forward to assure us that the great depression was due to the Republican party alone, or overproduction alone, or the loss of foreign markets alone, or the over-expansion of credit alone, or Wall Street ethics alone. Probably each of these factors deserves some credit for the result, but let us not believe the ballyhoo man who claims all the credit for one cause. Every war is the product of a muddle of motives; a strike is usually the upshot of a complex situation, and seldom is it possible to point to one man or one fact as the sole cause. Yet in all these situations we tend to simplify and pitch on the one factor that appeals to our prejudices, and to shut our eyes to all the rest. The obvious method of refutation is to expose this human failing, to demonstrate the presence of other causes, and their influence upon the situation.

EXERCISE

Refute as effectively as you can one of these fallacies:

- a. It was the marines who won the World War for America.
- b. The high cost of living is due to one thing alone: the exorbitant demands of the trades unions.
- c. Capitalism is the enemy. Capitalism commercializes our art and literature, fetters journalism, makes for the congestion and ugliness of city life, decorates our landscape

with billboards and gasoline stations, corrupts politics and justice, and makes democracy a farce.

d. Stopping Short at Superficial Causes

Another serious mistake in the discussion of causes is to ignore the difference between a superficial and a fundamental cause. We praise the inventor who makes a fortune out of some development in radio, and stop short without asking what theoretical scientist gave him the hint. We credit the game to the spectacular plays, and stop short without considering the months of training behind them. We denounce the agitator who stirs up class hatred, and conveniently forget the low wages which give him something to agitate about, and the stupid system which makes it necessary to pay low wages in the richest country in the world. Whenever it is a matter of allotting praise or blame, we must not stop short with the superficial causes but find what are the fundamental causes and who is responsible for them.

To deal with the fallacy of superficial causes is sometimes difficult and requires a profound knowledge of the subject. The roots of certain physical diseases lie deep, as well as the causes of certain social distempers. But even so, a superficial diagnosis can be attacked, and the existence of larger underlying forces can be shown.

EXERCISES

1. Answer as effectively as you can in 200 or 300 words one of these examples of superficial diagnosis:

a. Chicago owes its importance to the fact that it is the center of the packing industry, and contains the largest hotels, department stores, and mail order houses in the West.

b. Our entrance into the World War was caused by Germany's declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare.

c. The Oxford debating team won because two of the members happened to be more witty and suppleminded than our men.

d. These labor agitators ought to be in jail. They create discontent and violence.

2. Refute in 200 or 300 words some instance of superficial diagnosis of causes which you have met in conversation or reading.

8. Statistical Fallacies

We have all heard the remark, "There are lies, damn lies, and statistics," and have probably learned to look with suspicion upon those formidable rows of figures that seem so solid and so conclusive. Although it is impossible to cover the subject of statistical fallacies in a page, it is possible to suggest some of the commoner sources of error. One is the variable standard of measurement. When one reads that the number of feeble-minded is increasing in this country, he need not be alarmed. It is entirely possible that the qualifications for admittance to an insane asylum have been raised, and thus more persons are admitted to such institutions. A second fallacy may lie in the same inference, the fallacy of assuming static conditions. It is obvious that the population as a whole has increased as well as the population of the insane asylums. It is therefore a question of proportion, not of numbers alone. Many arguments regarding prosperity illustrate

this fallacy by ignoring the fact that while the deposits in the banks have mounted, the price of commodities has not remained static but has mounted too. Real wealth cannot be estimated by dollars alone but by what dollars will buy. Besides these special fallacies, the use of statistics is also liable to the errors of hasty generalization, and of mistaken or confused cause. Naturally, also, one should be careful to inquire as to the source of the statistics: only the statistics of disinterested and competent observers mean anything. And that brings us to the consideration of unreliable testimony, one of the great sources of error.

EXERCISE

Refute as effectively as you can all the fallacies in one of these arguments:

a. On a certain Christmas day there were arrested in Buffalo, where there were 3,000 barrooms, 39 persons on charges of drunkenness, whereas in Toronto, where there were only 150 saloons, 109 persons were arrested for the same offense. These facts prove that the saloon does not produce drunkenness.

b. The Jews in this country are not wealthier than non-Jews. There were in 1905, 4,000 millionaires in New York City, and as the Jews formed 20 per cent of the population, there should have been 800 Jewish millionaires. As a matter of fact there were not 200, and these Jews were by no means the wealthiest of the millionaires.

c. "Fifteen years ago a pair of nickel-plated skates cost \$15. Today the same pair can be obtained for \$5. The decline shows how protection cheapens prices."

d. "A funeral could be had in the United States before the Civil War for \$25. Gebhart prints the bill for a Boston funeral for 1829 for \$8. A funeral today for a Boston citizen

of the same class would probably cost \$400. Between the \$8 bill and the \$400 bill there is the difference of a century—face veils, limousines, professional pall-bearers, metal caskets, cast-stone vaults, chapel palms, newspaper notices, and morticians.”

REFUTING QUESTIONABLE STATEMENTS OF FACT

Facts, observed facts, are at the basis of most of our reasoning. Generalizations, analogies, assumptions would be hanging in the air if there were no solid foundation of fact. Mr. Gradgrind may have entertained too limited a notion of what constitutes a fact, since a rainbow and the thrill it gives us are facts; but he was right in his emphasis on facts. If your facts are wrong, you can only arrive at a right conclusion by accident. It must therefore occur to every thoughtful person that we are in a very precarious situation, since the amount of misinformation and misleading propaganda abroad in the world is so vast. How can truth survive in such a morass? Conan Doyle tells us that fairies have been seen recently in Yorkshire; the Power interests fill the schools with textbooks filled with favorable data; the Hauptmann case exhibits witnesses testifying on oath to contradictory and irreconcilable statements; President Wilson once denied all knowledge of the secret treaties of the Allies before he went to Paris, but Lloyd George and others contradict him; the Hearst news services represented Wise County, Virginia, which contains three modern towns, nine high schools, and a hundred school buildings, and has four hundred young men and women off at college, as “inhabited exclusively by bobcats, turkey-buzzards,

quick-triggered feudists, and hillbillies drowned in moonshine and tobacco juice." And someone writes to the papers to testify that he has seen snakes swallow their young, and someone else replies that the correspondent was only "seeing snakes." The Psalmist would seem to have been justified when he said that "All men are liars." At least, one is justified in subjecting all statements of fact to scrutiny. First, one should ask whether the statement is inherently probable; and second, whether the witness is reliable.

1. Vague and Improbable Statements

A statement that is vague or improbable naturally should be received with skepticism unless it is a matter of common knowledge. The statement that the sun has been eclipsed at various times and the statement that athletic coaches receive higher salaries than professors, are both vague and might seem to a rational mind somewhat improbable, but they are both matters of common knowledge. It would be absurd to challenge them. But the statement that sun spots affect the weather of the earth, and the statement that students pay but a small part of the cost of their education, are not so familiar and might well be challenged. The world is so full of vague rumors, baseless superstitions, plausible generalizations that it is necessary to be on one's guard. If you are told that Englishmen hate Americans, it is proper to demand definite facts: such sweeping assertions are the stock in trade of malicious rumor, and often have no more basis than the growling of some bellicose admiral. Until adequate

corroboration is forthcoming, vague assertions are worth nothing.

A statement may also be challenged as inherently improbable or incredible. The story that when the British troops were in danger of annihilation at the Battle of Mons, angels appeared and held off the German assault, even though there was abundance of definite detail, might well be challenged on the ground that it is highly improbable that supernatural aid should have intervened once and never again when British troops were in dire peril. The assertion of a prominent oil magnate that the secrecy which he maintained concerning the lease of oil wells from the navy on excessively profitable terms was due to patriotic motives, invites skepticism since there was no need for secrecy in the matter. If a statement conflicts with known facts or principles, it can only be established by the strongest confirmatory evidence or by appeal to the united testimony of competent and unbiased observers. Until, then, a fact is established and known, vague assertions that it is so receive, and should receive, no credit; and the more improbable it is, the more definite should be the information and the stronger the corroboration from factual evidence or personal testimony.

EXERCISE

Write a hundred words challenging one of the following statements:

- a. Arsenal have been discovered in the basements of certain Catholic churches.
- b. The League for Industrial Democracy is financed by Moscow.

- c. Sea serpents have been observed recently.
- d. Most successful alumni attribute their success to participation in extra-curricular activities.
- e. Gold has been made out of mercury.
- f. "The first witness was an huntsman, who swore that he went out with a pack of hounds to hunt a hare, and not far off from Julian Cox her house, he at last started a hare. . . . At last the huntsman perceiving the hare almost spent and making towards a great bush, he ran on the other side of the bush to take her up and preserve her from the dogs. But as soon as he laid hands on her, it proved to be Julian Cox, who had her head groveling on the ground." "Another witness swore that she had seen Julian Cox fly into her own chamber window in her full proportion, and that she very well knew her, and was sure it was she."
- g. "One wonders how many people know that many an important newspaper in the United States, and many an influential magazine, all unknown to their proprietors, have a man planted somewhere on the staff, whose business is to insinuate matter favorable to the Soviet government and to block out all criticism of it, and that these highly paid agents are supported by American money."

2. Unreliable Witnesses

Even though a statement may be detailed and entirely possible, it is not necessarily true: the witness may not be reliable. To question the reliability of a witness does not necessarily mean that the statement is false or the witness is dishonest. It simply means that the witness is human and liable to err, and that the statement is under suspicion of error. What tests then have we a right to apply to any witness?

The first general test is to question the accuracy of his observation. Does he have any defect of eyesight

or hearing? Is he subject to hallucinations? Is he easily suggestible? Was he under strong emotional excitement, or had he been drinking freely? Is he violently prejudiced? In matters technical is he trained to observe? Any marked defect in power of accurate observation will vitiate his testimony. The defect which we are least likely to consider is prejudice, and it is one of the most important. Some mothers are blind to the faults of their sons. An operative and an operator see a factory with different eyes. Accounts of what happened in a student scuffle are likely to vary with the sympathies of the observers. In a spiritualistic séance what sane and honest people will see, hear, and feel will bear a strong emotional bias. They will unconsciously transmute any thrilled whisper into the voice which they yearn to hear. Prove that a person has a strong emotional bias in the direction of his testimony, and he is practically disqualified as a serious witness.

The second general test of a witness is to question his ability and willingness to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth as he sees it. Has he ever been seriously charged with dishonesty? Is he given to exaggeration or distortion of statement? Again, is he biased by training, association, personal feelings, or a stake in the issue? If any of these questions can be answered definitely in the affirmative, the witness cannot be relied on.

Here are some examples of the refutation of unreliable testimony:

I may mention that Mrs. C——had a sitting with this medium, and that she insisted to me afterwards that the

two hands touched her, one on each side of her face, at the same instant. This shows the average person's lack of memory when describing details. I asked her if her face were not first touched on one side, and then quickly afterwards on the other; and she admitted that such might have been the case. . . . I am acquainted with a gentleman who in describing a slate performance which Slade gave him, solemnly tells me that he purchased and took his own slate with him, and that it never left his own hands or the light. Further he states most positively that he saw the message in the process of appearing on the slate letter by letter. This man is a traveling salesman for a large firm, a good business man, and honest. Now neither Slade nor any other person ever gave such a performance; and among all the magicians who saw Slade, no one ever witnessed such a trick. Truly, not much reliance can be put in miraculous tales related second-hand of such performances. One can only test such things by seeing the details oneself.

Five witnesses definitely identified Sacco as one of the bandits. Mary E. Splaine was working in a factory when she heard a shot. She ran to a window, over 60 feet from the scene of the crime, and saw a man previously unknown to her, for less than three seconds, in a car travelling over 15 miles an hour. She testified as to Sacco's appearance: "He weighed possibly 140 to 145 pounds. He was a muscular, active looking man. His left hand was a good-sized hand, a hand that denoted strength. . . . The forehead was high. The hair was brushed back and it was between, I should think, two inches and two and one half inches in length and had dark eyebrows, but the complexion was white, peculiar white that looked greenish." This was the description she gave at the trial, after having been shown Sacco alone. She was not made to pick him out from a line-up in the customary manner. At the preliminary hearing, about three weeks after the commission of the crime, she had testified that she could not identify the man she had seen in the car, saying: "I don't think my opportunity afforded me the

right to say he is the man." . . . Frances Devlin looked out of the same window as Mary Splaine. She thought Sacco was the man in the car but was not sure at the preliminary hearing. At the trial a year later she had no doubts. Pelsner saw the bandit car from another window. He admitted on May 6 or 7 that he was unable to make any identification, saying, "I did not see enough to be able to identify anybody." At the trial in June, 1921, he said that the man in the car was "the dead image" of Sacco. . . . Lola Andrews testified that she had spoken several hours prior to the murder to a man near a car standing outside the Slater & Morrill factory before the murder. After Sacco's arrest she identified him as the man. Mrs. Campbell, who was with her, said that the man they had spoken to was a different man. . . . George W. Fay, a Quincy policeman, said that Lola Andrews told him she had not seen the faces of the Braintree men. Alfred Labrecque, secretary of the Quincy Chamber of Commerce, also testified that Lola Andrews had told him that she could not identify any of the Braintree bandits. . . . Carlos E. Goodridge, who after the trial was discovered to be a fugitive from justice in another state, with four aliases and a criminal record which embraced bigamy, perjury, larceny, and horse-thieving, said that he saw the automobile and that Sacco was in it. Goodridge's employer, Andrew Manganaro, testified that Goodridge had told him that he was so scared that he could not remember the faces. Three others contradicted Goodridge. (William Floyd, *There is Justice.*)

Since most of our information comes at second hand through the newspapers and magazines, we must scrutinize them and test their ability and willingness to be accurate. Even magazines of good standing such as the *Nation* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, have very marked leanings, and without any aspersion on the integrity of their editors, one must take those lean-

ings into account in judging the statements in their columns. The *Nation* has a soft spot for every champion of liberty everywhere, and the *Saturday Evening Post* has a sentimental admiration for grand-dukes and dictators; and when reading their columns we must reckon with their idiosyncrasies.

Our daily press is probably above the gross venality of the French press, which took millions of francs from the Czar's government in exchange for systematic support of that government and its bonds. But in every political and economic struggle where thousands of dollars are involved, it should never be forgotten that money talks in newspaper columns as well as elsewhere. The Committee of Inquiry sent by the Interchurch World Movement to investigate the great steel strike of 1919 reported as follows:

The [Pittsburgh] *Post* printed a front page display story of two bank robbers who were killed, and asserted that the robbery "had its origin in the big steel strike and was hatched in the headquarters of the I. W. W. and reds in Monessen," by strikers. Two editors of the *Post* told the investigator that a detective (an undercover man among the strikers) brought them the story; that they did not believe that the I. W. W. had anything to do with the robbery; that they knew there was no I. W. W. headquarters in Monessen; but that printing the story would not hurt the dead robbers nor the detectives, and as for the I. W. W. "that organization is in disrepute anyway."

Not only does money talk, but also politics. William McAndrew, superintendent of the Chicago public schools, wrote a signed editorial in the *Educational Review* pointing out that warlike pictures had largely

disappeared from schoolroom walls. In the South, he said, portraits of Lee and Jackson were no longer common, and so far as he knew, there was not a single copy of "The Spirit of '76" displayed in a Chicago school. The *Chicago Tribune* ran a story on this editorial under the headline: "McAndrew Says Spirit of '76 Bad in Schools." Nothing in the editorial warranted the charge; in fact, the newspaper's own story did not support it. But the headline formed the basis of a movement to oust Mr. McAndrew from his position as a disloyal American. The notorious character of the Hearst newspapers renders all their news open to suspicion. And it was a former editor of the *New York Tribune* who declared: "I am paid \$150 a week for keeping my honest opinions out of the paper I am connected with."

The student may well ask, after meditating on the general unreliability of testimony, whether there is such a thing as a credible statement or a reliable witness. Will they not all shrivel up in the test tube of skepticism and leave nothing behind? In the next chapter dealing with Constructive Argument we shall go into this matter more fully. Suffice it here to say that if a statement has been made public for some time and has gone unchallenged, or if it is supported by undoubted facts, it is in all probability true; and if a witness is corroborated by all the other competent witnesses without possibility of collusion, or if being in his right mind, he testifies contrary to his own interests or his own ascertained feelings, he is probably to be relied on. For purposes of argument, moreover,

the authorities which one's opponent accepts as reliable can sometimes be turned against him with great effect. One should always keep this point in mind when reading arguments in order to refute them.

EXERCISE

Show as effectively as you can the unreliability of the source of one of these statements:

a. Another friend of mine who claims to have the power of seeing fairies is Mr. Tom Tyrrell, the famous medium, whose clairvoyance and general psychic gifts are of the strongest character. I can not easily forget how one evening in a Yorkshire hotel a storm of raps, sounding very much as if someone were cracking his fingers and thumb, broke out around his head, and how with his coffee-cup in one hand he flapped vigorously with the other to warn off his inopportune visitors. In answer to my question about fairies he says: "Yes, I do see these little pixies or fairies. I have seen them scores of times, but only in the woods and when I do a little fasting." (Conan Doyle, *The Return of the Fairies*.)

b. A well-known editorial writer and novelist, living in New York City, said in an article published in *Harper's Magazine*, December, 1928: "The American farmer is making home brew and hard liquor at home in a very general way."

c. William T. Roper, Coach of the Princeton football team, writes: "More men go out to play soccer or tennis or golf in a college where football interest is keen than where it is not, and of course the goal towards which every athletic director is working is to get as many students as possible to participate in some sort of athletics."

d. Professor Herbert T. Sparks asserts that his course in the Nineteenth Century Poets is the most popular in college. (Invent facts to show unreliability of witness.)

THE REFUTATION OF LONG ARGUMENTS

In reading through an article with the intention of refuting it, one should, of course, note all the weaknesses in testimony and errors in reasoning; one should note also any instances of self-contradiction or the use of authorities which might be turned to one's own advantage. But it might be sheer stupidity in composing a refutation to list all the blunders and attack them in succession. Every effective reply should distinguish carefully between the arguments that are likely to carry weight with an audience and those which are not. For example, a prejudiced and emotional audience will require a rebuttal of those appeals which touch their hearts or their pocketbooks. A highly intelligent audience will expect the rebuttal to pound at the logical foundation of the structure, not merely to knock off a few shingles. The successful reply to a series of points requires: first, a brief treatment or neglect of unimportant points, and emphasis on the points which count; and second, arranging the refutation of these points in a logical and, if possible, a climactic order.

The introduction to a reply must always, of course, inform the reader whom and what you are opposing. It may well contain three other matters: an opening designed to stimulate interest; a clarification of the issues by stating what is common ground, what part of the position taken by your opponent you do not contest; an enumeration or summary of the main points in your opponent's case which you do contest. If your reader then sees that you refute successfully

all these latter points he is much more ready to grant you the case than if he suspects the existence of other neglected matters.

In composing the refutation proper, remember three other points. First, quote whenever possible the precise words of the argument you are refuting, and thus convince your reader that you are not garbling your opponent's case but are attacking it fairly. Secondly, keep each step distinct and clear before your reader's mind. Never let him feel lost and wonder what you are driving at. The point to be refuted and your method of refuting it should always be patent to him from beginning to end. Thirdly, never pass on to another point without emphasizing what has just been refuted and how the refutation affects the argument as a whole.

EXERCISES

1. Study carefully the structure and paragraphing of Macaulay's *Morals of Restoration Comedy* and Huxley's *Episcopal Trilogy*, in *Models for Writing Prose*.

2. Point out the fallacies in "The Why of the Tabloids," *Forum*, LXXVII, 492 ff.

3. Write a refutation of the same in five hundred words.

4. Read the editorials and communications from readers in a newspaper or magazine. Find one that you thoroughly disagree with, on a subject of which you know something. Write a refutation intended for publication in the same paper.

CHAPTER X

CONSTRUCTIVE ARGUMENT

IT is much easier to blow up a bridge than to build one; it is easy to pick flaws in another's nature and hard to develop a strong character oneself. So too it takes about ten times more energy and clarity of mind to construct a positive argument on a complex subject than to attack it. Yet, of course, arriving at positive, constructive conclusions is a necessary and common process. Most of us concoct rough-and-ready reasons for our actions and opinions, and trust to luck that our judgment will be justified in the event. Far more accurate and complete are the processes by which judges test the constitutionality of laws, and lawyers test the reliability of witnesses, and scientists test new hypotheses. The work of the best lawyers and scientists demands the most indefatigable research, the most rigorous, clear, and penetrating thought. For this reason the law and science attain a far higher degree of probability in their results than do most of our private speculations. It should, nevertheless, be the ideal of every student to arrive at as assured results in his constructive argument as in his laboratory experiment; there is no sharper test of industry and intelligence.

FORMULATING THE PROPOSITION

We have already seen that there can be no profitable discussion unless the parties know what they are discussing. In formal debate it is imperative, and in less formal argument scarcely less desirable to frame a declarative sentence which one side affirms and the other denies. This is called the proposition, and the more explicit and unambiguous it is, the more chance there is of coming to grips and deciding the question. Is this a satisfactory proposition: "For the United States the type of the English university is preferable to the type of the American university"? It is far too loose, because there are at least two distinct types of English university with distinct advantages and disadvantages, and each has various characteristics, some of which might be desirable and others not. There is here no clear-cut issue; the answer would have to be as lame and halting as this: "One kind of English university is preferable in some respects, but in other respects not; and another kind is preferable in still other respects, but not in all." We had far better spend our time arguing the more explicit, limited proposition: "The tutorial system employed at Oxford and Cambridge should be adopted in all its essentials in American colleges and universities."

The proposition, then, should be clear in its terms and specific in its application. Moreover, it should satisfy three other conditions: (1) It must not be obviously true or obviously false. (2) It must not be double-barreled, as in this instance: "Hardy is more

realistic and idealistic than Fielding." (3) It should not be remote from the interests of the class.

EXERCISE

Rephrase in satisfactory form the following propositions for argument:

1. We should put more teeth into the laws against speeding.
2. Walt Whitman is the greatest poet of America.
3. Militarism is a menace in the colleges.
4. There should be some changes in the required reading in English for college entrance.
5. Student activities are more educational than the curriculum.
6. All organizations which have a radical tendency should be suppressed.

Other propositions which may be adapted to debate will be found at the close of the chapter.

INVESTIGATION

The methods of investigation in argument are much the same as those to be followed in exposition. Make a preliminary survey of the field, selecting if possible some authoritative and unbiased source. Make a tentative bibliography on the basis of the reference works most likely to furnish clues on your subject. Use the same system for taking notes. Do not overlook the picturesque detail, the apt anecdote, the striking statement. But realize that while these things add much to the interest and persuasive power of your argument, they actually prove very little. Concentrate

your main attention, then, on the main purpose of your investigation—the discovery of principles and facts that lead inevitably to your conclusion. There are three kinds of source that deserve your attention.

First, one thinks naturally of the arguments that have been written to support the side you favor. Rightly you will turn to these for material, but you should realize as you do so that that material carries little or no weight if it rests solely on the authority of the writer, however eminent he may be. The fact that he is a partisan renders every statement of his liable to the attacks to which in the last chapter we saw that biased or interested witnesses are subjected. Partisan testimony, even though true, is valueless. But there is still much that you may gain from reading the chief spokesmen of your own side. Your attention may be called to facts or principles that are so well known, so generally accepted that they need no authority to support them. You may learn lines of reasoning which are clearly logical and which commend themselves to every rational being. You may also find statements of fact or principle favorable to your side which are based on recognized authority or even on the admissions of the other side. You may be referred to other works which contain valuable evidence. All these matters should go into your notes. Remember, however, that no statement that relies simply on this partisan source for verification is of any value until it is verified also from some source that cannot be so easily challenged.

Second, there are the authoritative sources that both sides recognize. Among Christians the sayings of Jesus

enjoy such authority. Among Americans the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the dicta of Washington and Lincoln are generally accepted as fundamental principles. When it comes to matters of fact we have a vast number of authoritative works, none of them infallible but all commanding respect. The reference works mentioned in Chapter VI belong to this class. There are in addition numberless documents and reports issued by the federal government, the states, the various bureaus, and the universities. U. S. Government documents and reports are best found through Jones' *Finding List* or the *Comprehensive Index*. Other similar materials can be followed up through the cyclopedias, year-books, and the subject catalog of the library. The fact that these articles, reports, statistics have the backing of some organization of high standing, possess an official or semi-official character, gives them, until they are seriously challenged, far greater authority with all sides than the most confident assertions of any individual.

Third, and perhaps most important, are the principal spokesmen for the other side. Read them more attentively than you read the exponents of your own point of view; and for these reasons. If your convictions cannot survive the test of being exposed to challenge and criticism, you had better drop them. If they do survive, it is only by such careful reading that you can be sure that you are not meeting objections that were never put forward, but are clashing squarely on the points at issue. Moreover, you may by diligent and acute search discover a common ground of admitted facts and principles on which you can build

solidly the structure of your argument. Note that we are once more back to the all-important point: it is futile to base your argument on anything but facts and principles that even the skeptic has to admit.

If you are "gunning for" Wall Street, you will find your best ammunition in the *Wall Street Journal*; if you want to blow up the fraternity system, you will find your dynamite in the fraternity organs; if you wish evidence against communism, seek it in the *New Masses*. The best propagandist that the Allies had during the Great War was a certain fire-eating German general, Bernhardt, whose book proclaimed proudly all the worst that could be said against Germany. So, too, Lincoln in his Cooper Union speech caught up an admission made by Senator Douglas and used it as the foundation of his own case:

In his speech last autumn at Columbus, Ohio, as reported in *The New York Times*, Senator Douglas said: "Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better than we do now." I fully indorse this, and I adopt it as a text for this discourse. I so adopt it because it furnishes a precise and an agreed starting point for a discussion between Republicans and that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas. It simply leaves the inquiry: What was the understanding those fathers had of the question mentioned?

Then, by taking Douglas at his own word, and by showing that his own admission led him inevitably to Lincoln's conclusion, Lincoln scored a magnificent and honorable triumph.

There are two points to be noted here: the enor-

mous advantage of starting with something already admitted by the most prominent representative of the other side; second, the effectiveness of direct quotation. Vague, garbled, inaccurate statements attributed to your opponents are bogs in which you and your argument will sink; whereas succinct and exact quotations afford a rock base for your structure.

In gathering material for argument remember this. The foundation of every solid constructive argument is the common ground of agreed or admitted facts, principles, and authorities.

DECIDING THE ISSUES

After a student has made himself familiar with both sides, he is in a position to work out a satisfactory statement of issues. In other words, what are the big questions on which the bigger question hangs? It is almost always possible, after a consideration of the type to which the proposition belongs, to decide on a preliminary statement of issues.

If it is a question of fact—whether or not such an event occurred and in such a manner—then the issues will group themselves under two main heads:

- I. Are the witnesses to the fact reliable?
- II. Is the fact corroborated by other well-attested or admitted facts?

Is it a question of applying a general law or principle to a particular case? Then the main issues would be:

- I. Does the general law or principle have this precise sense?
- II. Does it always hold good?
- III. Does the case in question fall under the general law?

If it is a question of analogy, the issues will be:

- I. Do the points of resemblance between the two cases affect the point at issue?
- II. Are the points of difference between the two cases too weak to outweigh the resemblances?

A question of generalizing from one or more instances naturally suggests the following issues:

- I. Are all important variations that may exist within the class properly represented in the instances?
- II. Do the instances adduced show the existence of an underlying cause which would warrant the generalization?
- III. Are there no instances which would prove the generalization wrong?

If it is a question of abandoning one policy and adopting another, the following issues present themselves:

- I. Is the present policy out of accord with accepted principles?
- II. Does it work injustice?
- III. Does it fail to produce the benefits that might be expected, and even work actual harm?
- IV. Is there reason to believe that its defects cannot be remedied without abandoning the policy itself?
- V. Does the new policy harmonize with accepted principles, laws, or precedents?
- VI. Is it just?
- VII. Is it beneficial?
- VIII. Will it work under the circumstances contemplated?
- IX. Are other policies put forward inferior to this?

It must be understood that these theoretical issues are not to be adopted without change. For every proposition requires an adjustment of these theoretical issues to the practical issues of the case. Often some of the theoretic issues are not live issues at all, and may be discarded. A charge of murder, for instance, if no one saw the act, might not depend on the credibility of witnesses but solely on the circumstantial evidence. In other words, the issue: Are the witnesses to the fact reliable? is as dead as the victim of the murder. The live issue is: Is the fact corroborated by other well-attested or admitted facts? An issue may be passed over when both sides agree as to the answer. For example, the question whether a student has violated a smoking regulation might depend not at all on the validity of the regulation; nor on the question whether the student did puff upon a white cylinder of paper filled with a drug. All parties are agreed on these points. The one issue is: Does the regulation which condemned "smoking" include the smoking of cubeb cigarettes? In other words, the argument turns solely on the meaning of terms.

Let us take a larger question: Should intercollegiate athletics be abolished in favor of intramural sports? It is obviously a question of policy, and if we turn to the theoretic issues suggested for such a question, we shall see that some of them can be ignored, namely, II, VI, VIII, IX. There is no issue of justice or injustice here; there is no doubt that intramural sports can be developed; there is no alternative plan. The remaining issues would then be re-phrased thus:

- I. Is intercollegiate athletics as it exists out of accord with the acknowledged purposes of educational institutions?
- II. Does intercollegiate athletics produce more harm than good?
- III. Are the defects of the system ineradicable?
- IV. Do intramural sports harmonize with the acknowledged purposes of educational institutions?
- V. Do such sports do more good than harm?

Now though all these issues are real and call for some treatment, it is also true that one issue stands out far above the others in importance, namely, the second. Settle this, and the whole question is practically settled. It is, moreover, an issue of some complexity. Both because of its importance and its complexity, this issue needs to be subdivided. What principle of subdivision shall we follow? Two principles suggest themselves: division according to the groups affected, and division according to the kinds of effect. The latter division seems to involve less overlapping and repetition; we choose that; and divide the issue according to the physical, the moral, and the intellectual effects. The issue, thus subdivided, would stand like this:

- II. Does intercollegiate athletics produce more harm than good?
 - A. Are the physical benefits outweighed by the defects of the system?
 - B. Is the prevailing effect on the moral atmosphere bad?
 - C. Is it antagonistic to the intellectual life of the college?

It may occur to someone that there is no place under the five main issues listed for the advertising value which victories on the gridiron and diamond possess

for a college. But if we admit that success in athletics does attract students—and there seems to be no doubt that it does—we discover that the issue is really involved in issue I and issue II C. For we may well ask whether the policy of attracting students to a college by means of great athletic carnivals would accord with the ideas of the founders or with sound educational theory. Furthermore, we may well ask whether the students who are attracted to a college mainly by the scores of its football team are likely to contribute to the intellectual distinction of the place. It would seem, therefore, as if the five main issues really covered the question.

Deciding the issues involves five steps: consideration of the typical issues involved in a proposition of the given type; omitting those which do not apply or are not contested; seeing that all the points brought up on both sides are covered; subdividing important and complex issues; and phrasing every issue and subissue as an interrogation to which the affirmative answers "Yes," and the negative "No."

EXERCISE

Decide upon the issues really involved in these arguments and write them down in proper form:

1. *Silas Marner* (or some other novel) should be dropped from the list of required reading for college entrance.
2. If intercollegiate athletics is to be abolished, so should intercollegiate debating.
3. Cooper was a third-rate novelist.

4. Loud-speakers that are louder than the speaking tones of the human voice should be prohibited in urban dwelling houses and apartments.

5. Men are better cooks than women.

WORKING OUT A BRIEF

A clear, systematic statement of issues is a great step forward in the organization of an argument. The next is the construction of a brief; that is, a complete logical skeleton of one side of the argument.

By this time, presumably, you have decided on which side of the proposition the best evidence lies, and you therefore adopt the affirmative or the negative position. The issues are for you no longer open questions, but have become challenges to dissent or agreement. Instead of main issues you have now main points: in fact, there should be a precise correspondence between the issues and the main points of the brief. If you have adopted the negative on the proposition that intercollegiate athletics should be abolished, then the basic skeleton of your brief will look like this:

Intercollegiate athletics should not be abolished, for

- I. It is not out of accord with the acknowledged purposes of colleges and universities.
- II. It does not produce more harm than good.
- III. Its defects are not ineradicable.
- IV. Intramural sports are out of accord with the acknowledged purposes of colleges and universities.
- V. Such sports show no wider margin of beneficial over harmful effects than does intercollegiate athletics.

Of course, it is possible to contend that intercollegiate athletics and intramural sports should be main-

tained side by side, with the aim of providing every student with all the physical-recreation he needs. If that is what you believe, you will of course omit the fourth and fifth points. After all, they are not vital to your case.

As the proposition and the main points which support it stand before you, you will perceive that the next step is to provide the underpinning for each of the main points. You should carefully consider what evidence is theoretically desirable to prove each point, —what facts, what established principles, what analogies, what proof of causal connection. Write these in tentatively but fully, following each statement of a main point by the word “for,” and then writing out as subheads the sort of statements that would conclusively prove it. If any of them are facts or principles so well known as to need no support from testimony, or if the logic is conclusive by itself, then let those subheads stand. Go over your notes now to see whether they will afford the necessary foundation for any of your other subpoints. Be as critical of your own material as you would be of any argument that you were refuting. Introduce into your scheme the material from your notes whenever it offers valid support for your points. Reject whatever is irrelevant or feeble or wholly inconclusive. For example, does the testimony of half a dozen letter men to the effect that they studied harder during the season than at other times tend to prove that intercollegiate athletics is not antagonistic to the intellectual interests of the college? If you were on the opposite side you would quickly find loopholes in this contention. First, the witnesses

are biased; second, there are not enough of them to afford even the flimsiest basis for a generalization; third, studying merely in order to "get by" can hardly be said to promote the intellectual life. These witnesses, this argument, must be discarded because they do not stand up under critical examination. But if you still believe that intercollegiate athletics is not antagonistic to the intellectual interests of the college, you should ask yourself what facts, based on what testimony, would warrant a generalization to that effect. The facts that would conclusively, triumphantly, prove your contention would be evidence that at those institutions where intercollegiate athletics had been suspended or abolished there had not ensued any marked improvement in the intellectual activities, such as dramatics, literary publications, debating, or scholarship. And the testimony that would carry conviction to even the most hardened skeptic would be the testimony of college officers who had been responsible for the discontinuance of intercollegiate athletics. In fact, it might well be said that only the evidence from such experiments would establish a causal relation between stadiums and studies, and prove it to be good, bad, or indifferent.

Your course, then, after the main points of your brief are fixed, should be to think out and set down the ideal means of proof for these points, to introduce from your notes all the material that buttresses and corroborates these theoretic arguments, to discard any notes that are irrelevant or weak, and then search once more for the material you need to show that your theoretic lines of argument are also solidly based on experience and authoritative principles. What you can-

not substantiate in this fashion may be false, is certainly liable to a powerful bombardment, and tends to weaken your whole case. Eliminate it.

You have now something more than the basic skeleton of your brief; you have all the bones of your argument, and you know roughly where they should fit in. But unless you have had previous training in the construction of a brief, you will hardly know how to put the whole skeleton together in systematic, clear coherent form. The special form of the brief, though difficult to learn, is well worth the effort, for it will clarify your argument immensely for you and for anyone who wishes to test its power to convince. Study the rules with care; watch their application in the specimen brief; and apply them rigorously to your own brief.

1. Rules for Briefing

1. The affirmation or the denial of the proposition should stand at the head of the brief, followed by the word "for."

2. Under this should stand the main heads and subheads of the argument, each in the form of one, and only one, complete declarative statement. Never use mere phrases or questions.

3. The main heads must correspond to the main issues that are in dispute, and the chief subheads to the chief subheads (if any) in the statement of issues.

4. The main heads should tend to prove the truth of your side of the proposition, and every subhead down to the lowest should tend to prove the truth of the head under which it stands.

5. This relation should always be indicated by connecting each statement to the proof which follows by the word "for." Never in a brief use "therefore" or "hence."

6. The degree of subordination should always be clearly shown by depth of indentation and by the use of symbols of different rank, thus:

I.

A.

1.

a.

x.

y.

z.

b.

2.

a.

b.

x.

y.

c.

d.

x.

3.

a.

Never use more than one such symbol before a statement. See that coördinate symbols stand at an equal distance from the margin.

7. Every subhead for which there is no supporting or lower subhead should be a principle or fact which you know to be acceptable on its face or for which you can produce acceptable authority.

8. Wherever you rely on witnesses or authorities to back your statement, use if possible their own words in briefest form and cite the reference in parentheses, thus:

- f. As late as 1734 it was said, that the Law was "scarcely expressible properly in English." (*Cambridge History of English Literature*, I, 408.)

9. Refutation should always take this form:

- (Heading) The argument that is groundless (or fallacious, or irrelevant), for
 (Subhead)
 (Subhead)

For example:

- A. The argument that depressions are valuable because they eliminate the unfit is absurd, for
1. The identification of the unfit with the unemployed is absurd, for
 - a. The unemployed include some of the most valuable citizens: nearly all artists and architects, skilled laborers displaced by machines, and young men and women entering professional life.
 - b. The fit would include all those who made money during the depression: stock market bears, prosperous bootleggers and gangsters.

Here follows a specimen brief on the affirmative of the proposition that intercollegiate athletics should be abolished in favor of intramural sports. It illustrates the principles of briefing and follows the regulations, except—and this is important—in regard to rules 7 and 8. If these rules were complied with, the brief

would be, ostensibly at least, a perfect brief, embodying a flawless argument, and there would be nothing left for the other side to say. This brief, therefore, does not pretend to close the question; the argument is decisive only if and when every lowest subhead which is not acceptable on the face of it is backed by an acceptable witness or authority.

2. Brief

Intercollegiate athletics should be abolished in favor of intramural sports, for

- I. Intercollegiate athletics produces more harm than good, for
 - A. The physical benefits are completely outweighed by the defects of the system, for
 1. The benefits are limited to the comparatively few who make the varsity teams and squads.
 2. These benefits are largely offset by the injurious effects on these same students, for
 - a. Many of them are injured by overstrain or accident.
 - b. A few are killed.
 - c. Statistics prove that athletes do not live as long as other college graduates.
 3. Intercollegiate athletics interferes with proper exercise for the majority of students, for
 - a. The amount of money spent on varsity games far exceeds that spent on intramural sports.
 - b. The field space allotted to varsity practice and games is out of all proportion to that devoted to other forms of athletics.
 - c. Reports from 147 colleges show that less than 50% of men students participate in games one or more times a year.

4. The argument that intercollegiate football is necessary to the financial support of other athletics is questionable, for
 - a. Certain women's colleges are able to provide athletic facilities for practically all students without the gate-receipts from football.
 - b. Unless alumni who now contribute to intercollegiate athletics will default when it comes to athletics for all, there will be no lack of funds.
- B. The moral effects are bad, for
 1. Games are regarded as a legitimate occasion for large-scale betting and drinking.
 2. College spirit is concentrated not on good sportsmanship or useful service, but on hysterical cheering and victory at any cost.
 3. Professionalism exists in spirit if not in the letter.
 4. Knowledge of this fact induces cynicism among undergraduates regarding law and honor.
 5. The argument that the varsity athlete receives training in self-control, though true, is of minor importance, for
 - a. It applies only to a small part of the student body only a part of the time.
- C. The intellectual effects are disastrous, for
 1. It is impossible for most varsity athletes to devote much attention to studies during the season, for
 - a. Long trips take them away for days at a time.
 - b. Practice, study of signals, "doping out" games take hours every day.
 - c. The excitement of the games makes it difficult to think seriously of anything else.

2. The undergraduate body is inoculated with the impression that intellectual distinction is entirely secondary to athletic distinction, for
 - a. The intellectual and artistic achievements of undergraduates receive little recognition from alumni, the general public, the press, and the girls.
 - b. The star athlete is the idol of them all.
- II. The main defects of intercollegiate athletics are ineradicable, for
 - A. The improvements effected in the situation, though they deserve applause, do not touch the heart of the matter, for
 1. The number of participants in intercollegiate athletics cannot be greatly increased.
 2. Professionalism cannot be eliminated, for
 - a. Where thousands of dollars are involved, amateur standards cannot be preserved.
 - b. Nothing can prevent rich alumni from sending promising young men to college at their expense.
 3. In spite of all efforts to the contrary, the star athlete is more likely to be spoiled by the attention of press and public today than ever before.
 4. This fact inevitably distorts the student point of view regarding intellectual as against athletic distinction.
 - III. Intercollegiate athletics is not in accord with the recognized purposes of educational institutions, for
 - A. No college charter states that one of the main objects to which the enthusiasm and loyalty of the student body should devote itself is the winning of athletic victories over rival colleges.
 - B. In so far as this object enlists the loyalty and

enthusiasm of the student body it distracts their attention from the true objects of collegiate education.

- C. To set up false standards of value is to defeat one of the chief purposes of education—to teach true standards of value.

IV. Intramural sports are the inevitable substitute, for

A. There is no other.

B. They meet the needs of the situation.

1. Their physical benefits are counterbalanced by no defects, for

a. They furnish exercise for all students all the time.

b. They do not tend to overtax any of them.

c. They supply a motive for all students to keep "fit" all the time.

2. They are not open to moral objections, for

a. They do not furnish occasions for hysteria, betting, and drinking on a large scale.

b. They remove all incentive to professionalism.

c. They tend to cultivate the ideal of sport for sport's sake.

3. They do not divert student admiration and ambition from the life of the mind.

4. They are therefore not inconsistent with the recognized purposes of educational institutions.

5. They work out well in practice, for

a. At Oxford and Cambridge, where varsity games absorb little attention, the physical and the intellectual life both benefit.

b. At Reed College, when intercollegiate athletics was barred, participation in intramural sports was almost universal.

EXERCISES

1. Go over the preceding brief and find out which of those subheads that are unsupported by any lower subheads are acceptable without further question, and which require support from testimony. What type of person is it whose testimony would carry conviction to those who doubted or opposed the proposition? From what sources, printed or otherwise, would one be likely to obtain such testimony?

2. What mistakes have been made in the following example of briefing? Quote the rules that have been violated.

I. The receipts at the St. Louis game were \$51,613.

A. At the Omaha game \$72,907.

B. But the expenses for those two games came to \$88,000.

II. Therefore, intercollegiate athletics is enormously expensive and encourages extravagance.

Rewrite this bit of argument in proper brief form.

3. Brief the argument proper (not the introductory remarks) in Foster's *Should Students Study?* (p. 377).

After you have mastered the principles of briefing, put your argument into correct brief form, applying, of course, rules 7 and 8. Examine the result carefully in these three ways:

First, test it to see that the logical framework is secure, that the fundamental facts and assumptions are sound, and that each of the logical processes is free from fallacy.

Second, test it to see that the expression is clear and complete; for example, that the implied general laws are stated.

Third, check up to see that the rules of briefing are followed undeviatingly.

Your completed brief stands as a test of your ability to investigate the subject with a keen eye for the evidence that will really count, and to put that evidence into a logical framework. It is a severe test for a beginner. But if you can meet the test with a solidly based, firmly knit brief, it is an intellectual achievement of which you may well be proud.

WRITING THE INTRODUCTION

The brief, be it remembered, is the logical skeleton of one side of the case; and very much of a skeleton! It needs to acquire flesh and blood, moods and manners, polish and personality, before it can venture out into society. More than that, it has to be introduced.

How it shall be introduced depends on what society it is to which we wish to introduce it. Is it a class of agriculture students, a class of prospective lawyers, a women's club, the readers of a particular paper? Settle this point first. It is the task of the introduction to prepare this group of readers or hearers emotionally and intellectually. In order to prepare the way emotionally you must realize what the attitude of this group is towards your contention. If they are hostile, you must take extreme measures to disarm suspicion. Indulge in a joke at your own expense; review the situation from their point of view—not, of course, admitting that it is the true point of view or conceding facts that did not take place; emphasize such points of agreement as exist between you and them. Sometimes a peculiarly magnetic or brilliant personality can attack his audience hammer and tongs and force them

to his point of view. But, in general, violent language and sneering insinuation make a hostile audience even more hostile. Even if your readers are merely skeptical, see to it that your introduction contains no statement that is not admittedly true. If you believe that the Democratic party is not as respectable socially as the Republican, do not say so outright in an introduction written south of Mason and Dixon's line, though it is possible to remark that the question has been raised. If you believe that a certain labor leader has betrayed his fellow workers, do not make the charge before those who believe in him, until you are ready to substantiate it in the argument proper. You may, however, assert that the charge has been made, and that you propose to prove it. Unsubstantiated assertions on your own authority count against you wherever you introduce them in your argument. The introduction should not contain even insinuations, but should be good-tempered, rather more than ready to grant the other side whatever measure of truth and right they possess. Then their emotional attitude will be tolerant, even friendly, and your argument will get a hearing.

The second task of an introduction is intellectual preparation. Do not follow any formula for the formula's sake, but ask yourself, "What must my readers understand before they can follow my case? Do they know the general situation? Do they understand the proposition? Are they influenced by misconceptions and irrelevant considerations?" So far as it is necessary, then, state the undisputed facts of the situation, define the proposition, point out the more obvi-

ous confusions that blur the real question. Never fail to state clearly just what the proposition is, and what the issues are. If you can show your method of proof simply, do so.

Emotional preparation, then, involves two things: meeting the reader's point of view at least half way, and avoiding the appearance of prejudging the case by dogmatic assertions. Intellectual preparation involves clarifying, as far as your reader requires, three things: the situation, the proposition, and the method of proof.

EXERCISE

Study the introductions of some specimen arguments to see what audiences they seem to be aimed at; what emotional preparation there is; what intellectual preparation; how far the preparation has been successful. See *Should Students Study?* in this book, p. 377, and *The Morals of Restoration Comedy*, and *An Episcopal Trilogy*, in *Models for Writing Prose*.

ADAPTING THE BRIEF

The brief is intended to furnish a complete logical skeleton of the case. But the written or spoken argument cannot always be complete; there are limits of time or space. Moreover, an order which is satisfactory as logic may not be so satisfactory as rhetoric. Accordingly, before settling down to the composition of the argument proper, it is well to consider what should be omitted, what elaborated at length, and what point should form the climax. In other words, we are confronted at the outset by the problems of emphasis.

Some points need little or no emphasis with your

particular readers and may be omitted. An intelligent audience does not need to be convinced that a Japanese invasion of our Pacific coast is a bugaboo; an audience in the textile towns of Massachusetts needs no demonstration that they are facing hard times; a hard-headed group of realtors would offer little response to the argument that cities of old were proud of their beauty, and one had better confine his remarks to the rental value of attractive sites. Considering then the limitations of your space and the character of your readers, decide whether you should omit certain points altogether.

On the other hand, other points should be played up and elaborated with such facts, illustrations, analogies, quotations, as will impress them strongly on the imagination of the reader. Certain fallacies that obsess the minds of your hearers can only be driven out by prolonged and vigorous attack. If a statesman whose word carries great weight has spoken on the subject in a way to further your cause, do not cut his remarks to the minimum, but quote fully and allow the effect to sink in. Before beginning your task, calculate with some care the proportion of space you should devote to your chief points.

Emphasis, be it remembered, is also concerned with order. When logic requires strictly a certain procedure, follow it. Otherwise consider how best you may work up to a climax or at least avoid a let-down. In the old legends of the Round Table we read that Sir Gawain's strength in battle increased from sunrise to noon, and then gradually waned till sunset. Emulate Gawain's

morning habits, but follow his afternoon behavior at your peril.

It should be noted that the possible omission and rearrangement of your main points may call for corresponding adjustments in the introduction. Of course, the statement of issues and the announced method of proof should correspond exactly to the program as it is actually carried out.

COMPOSING THE ARGUMENT PROPER

The material gathered, the plan fixed, the proportions assigned, the introduction written, there remains only the composition of the argument itself. And here some cautions and recommendations are desirable.

First, avoid the use of the technical language of logic and forensic oratory. Unless you can assume that your readers have recently been put through a course in argumentation or logic, and are familiar with the terminology, you merely mystify them when you talk of the "*petitio principii*," "*argumentum ad hominem*," and "*causal induction*." A reference to the "*premises*" will suggest a real estate squabble, and if you bring up "*Mill's canons*" in support of your case, they will probably expect to witness an artillery duel. Likewise, unless your argument is to be used as the basis for a debate, it is well to avoid the formal language of the platform: "My honorable opponent has vainly sought to prove—" "It is my purpose tonight, ladies and gentlemen, to show you that we of the negative—" "Let me ask you, my friends; is there one of you here tonight who would not shed the last drop of his blood

for liberty?" Rhetorical questions like the one just quoted should be used sparingly, and then only to drive home a point to which you know your audience will assent, either because the point is self-evident or because you have produced convincing evidence. The lingo of the logician or the orator is out of place in written argument.

Secondly, note that there is an essential difference between the brief and its written presentation. The brief always presents a conclusion and then its proof. If transcribed literally, it would drop each main point when it had reached the lowest subhead, perhaps some minor detail removed by several steps from the conclusion to which it led. Nothing could be more fatuous than to leave the reader pondering this detail and wondering perhaps just what it proved, and to go on to the next point. Coherence and emphasis both demand that every point should be clinched at the close of the evidence for it. In other words, first announce your point, then produce your evidence, and then use the evidence to ram the point home.

Finally, breathe life into the dry bones of your brief. Debating in American colleges has been on a steady decline, whereas in England it has never been a more favored pastime than now. What is the difference? Partly it is due to the fact that the typical English student enjoys the athletics of the mind, the wrestling with tricky problems, and he infects the audience with his enthusiasm. The American debater, at least of the old school, seemed to regard his labors as so much hard work, and he made his audience feel that sitting through a debate was about as much fun as watching

a gang of ditch-diggers. These solemn youths dug up statistics from the depths of the library, and piled up quotation on quotation, from the most eminent authorities: all very commendable, no doubt, but the performance seemed laborious and dull. The chief difference between these men and English debaters was the difference between impressing a judge and entertaining an audience. The English student knows that a debate can be entertaining, and deliberately sets out to entertain as well as to convince.

He has his illustrative anecdote; he turns his statistics into images that the mind can grasp; he quotes the witty epigram of this statesman or that comedian, and is not incapable of an epigram of his own; his narrative of events is not a dry rehearsal of facts but an imaginative human story; if the inconsistencies of his opponent offer a subject for good-natured humor, he makes the most of the opportunity. Without departing from the logical progress of his argument, he contrives to make it all strike the emotions of his audience as well as their cooler cerebral centers. If the good English debater demonstrates nothing else, he demonstrates at least that the intellectual life can be dramatic, humorous, vital.

THE CONCLUSION

Beware of too formal and stereotyped a conclusion.

"Finally, ladies and gentlemen, let me summarize the points which we of the affirmative have put before you. First, this proposition is supported by all the venerable precedents of the past. Secondly, it has benefited the peoples of Switzerland, Canada, New Guinea,

and Brazil. Thirdly, the objections to the plan are the inventions of prejudiced and interested parties. Finally and above all, there is no other way in which we can meet the new exigencies, the new perils which lie before this nation, than to adopt this policy. We trust to your intelligence and wisdom to support the duty on clams."

Such formal summaries, though they are well enough in the sterner type of debate and in the courts of law, sound too stiff and pretentious for the conclusion of most written arguments. Summarize if you will; it is an excellent thing to do if your case is complicated, is difficult to remember, or demands stress upon all the points. But summarize without formal enumeration. Never fear that your points, if clearly put, will fail to get home. But remember that as in exposition, so here, it is the function of your last paragraph, your last sentences to stamp deep the thought which you want most to leave in the minds of the group you are addressing. How does the question affect them most intimately, what is the plea that will pierce home? Even if they are comparatively indifferent, there is some phase of the problem that stirs their interest more than another. That is the phase to stress.

As to the form of the conclusion, there is little to recommend except to avoid the trite, the hysterical, the bombastic. If no forceful method suggests itself to you, study the conclusions of other written arguments. Perhaps you may find a hint in one of them.

SUGGESTED PROPOSITIONS FOR ARGUMENT

1. Latin should be required for all students who expect to major in any literature or language.
2. No student should be permitted to keep a motor car during his residence at college.
3. Military drill should be made entirely optional in the land grant colleges.
4. A practical course in individual and social morals should be required for all students.
5. The government should pay \$80 a month to every college student whose grades are above the average for his class and who is without resources.
6. A month's reading period without classes should be introduced at the end of every semester before examinations.
7. Every student should take a general examination in his major field before graduation.
8. Not more than half the trustees of this college (or university) should be representatives of business or the law.
9. A student's standing should be determined, not by course examinations given by his instructor, but by three examinations set by impartial outsiders at the end of his freshman, sophomore, and senior years.
10. All students who have the grade of B or better in all their subjects should be granted unlimited cuts for the next semester.
11. Mathematics should be compulsory for all freshmen.
12. The "orientation course" at this college should be abandoned.
13. The varsity athlete is generally better prepared for after life than he would be if he had not gone out for inter-collegiate athletics.

14. Women and men should have precisely the same cultural education in college.

15. An introductory course in the fine arts, music, and the handicrafts should be a requirement for graduation.

16. A director of vocational guidance should be attached to this college.

17. Students should not be allowed to form groups for the study of communism.

18. A course treating the Bible from a historical, not a dogmatic, standpoint should be a requirement for graduation.

19. The anti-evolution laws are frequently evaded in the schools of this state.

20. Every college graduate should be entitled to two votes in all political elections.

21. The tutorial system in use at Oxford and Cambridge should be adopted in this college (the question of expense being waived).

22. In all privately endowed colleges students should pay as much of the full cost of their tuition, board, and maintenance as their parents can afford.

23. No student should attend recitations, lectures, laboratory or conference periods in more than two subjects in one day.

24. The wealthiest men in this country are seldom those who have performed the greatest service to the public.

25. The sales tax is preferable to any tax based on income.

26. The federal government should never grant money relief to the unemployed.

27. The amount of property transferable by inheritance should be limited to a value of \$200,000.

28. The movement toward consumers' coöperatives should be encouraged.

29. A federal tax based on the amount of human labor displaced should be placed on all factory machinery and should be used to give decent living conditions to the unemployed.

30. The federal government should have a monopoly on the manufacture of all war materials.

31. The federal government should extend its control of hydroelectric power.

32. The United States should join the League of Nations.

33. It is for the best interests of the Orient that Japan should control China.

34. The American farmer would be better off if he produced what he needed instead of producing for an already glutted market.

35. A progressive reduction of the hours of labor by federal enactment is the best cure for unemployment.

36. An adequate old-age pension system should be established in order that young people may have jobs and be able to marry.

37. The possession, sale, and transportation of beverages containing more than 12% alcohol should be prohibited in this state.

38. Outdoor advertising should be prohibited in this state outside of towns and villages.

39. A federal law should require that every motor vehicle be equipped with an automatic device which would limit the speed to forty miles an hour (constitutionality waived).

40. Mr. Hearst's solicitude for the welfare of the common people of the United States is not sincere.

MODEL ARGUMENT

SHOULD STUDENTS STUDY? *

by William Trufant Foster

"Do not let your studies interfere with your college education." This motto adorns the walls of many a student's room. It is his semi-humorous way of expressing his semi-conviction that studies do not count—that the thing to go in for is—"College Life." This thing, made up of intercollegiate athletics and lesser diversions, is spelled with capitals—with big capitals in the student's mind. This frequenter of college walks and halls and tombs and grandstands I call a "student" for want of a safer term, though it sometimes does him injustice. He has sundry answers to the question whether students should study.

In academic circles, this is not merely an academic question. The boy who goes to college faces it, in one form or another, again and again. Indeed, before he dons his freshman togs, his father has told him to get an all-round education, and may even have given him to understand that deficiencies in scholarship, which do not end his college career, will be overlooked if he makes the football team. He observes the boys who return from college; he finds that their language and their clothes bear marks of a higher education. He hears accounts of initiations and celebrations. His chum's big brother takes him aside and tells him confidentially just how he must conduct himself in order to be rushed for the right fraternity. Everybody tells him he must be a "good fellow"; few discourse upon the joys of the curriculum. Whether students should study may remain with him an open question, but he begins to doubt whether students do study.

With his mind set on going to college, he reads all that comes to hand on the subject. The newspapers give him vivid

* From *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1916. By permission of the publishers.

details of the games, big and little, with full-page pictures of the heroes. They report night-shirt parades, student riots, dances, beer-nights—anything but studies. Now and then they do give space to a professor, if he has been indiscreet, or has appeared to say something scandalous, which everybody in college knows he did not say, or if he is sued for divorce. They even spare him an inch or two if he is awarded a Nobel prize.

The lad reads stories of College Life. How they glow with escapades! His mind becomes a moving-picture of thrilling escapes, of goats enthroned on professorial chairs, of freshies ducked in chilling waters, of battalions of rooters yelling with the precision of a cash-register. Now and then there is mention of lectures and examinations, for it appears that the sophisticated youth knows many devices for "getting-by" these impediments to the unalloyed enjoyment of College Life. Surely the high-school teacher who spoke with such enthusiasm about the lectures of "Old Socrates" must be hopelessly behind the times. Surely nobody goes to college nowadays for lectures.

After entering college the boy continues his studies in the philosophy of education under the tutelage of a sophomore. His tutor informs him that the object of education is the all-round man. The faculty and the curriculum, he explains, are obstacles, but the upper classes rescue the poor freshman from pentagonal and other primitive shapes and round him out with smokers, hazing, initiations, jamborees, and visits to the big city, where he makes the acquaintance of drinks and ladies far more brilliant-hued than those of his somber native town. He is told that he is "seeing life," and that college will make an all-round man of him yet, if the faculty do not interfere with his education.

If this sophomoric philosophy leaves any doubts to puzzle the freshman, they may be cleared away by the alumni who return to warm up the fraternity-house with stories of the good old days. And, of course, the lad joins a fraternity before giving his course of study a thought. For what is college

to a non-fraternity man? Merely an institution of learning. To the man with the Greek-lettered pin the fraternity is the *sine qua non* of higher education, the radiant whole of which the college is a convenient part, providing for the fraternity a local habitation.

And so the undergraduate stretches his legs before the hearth and hears the wisdom of the "Old Grad." In his day, it seems, things were different. The students were not such mollicoddles, the beer flowed more freely, and the faculty did not try to run things. No, sir, in the good old days the faculty did not spoil College Life. What a glorious celebration after that 56 to 0 game, when every window in old West Hall was broken and the stoves were thrown down-stairs!

"I tell you, boys," cries the Old Grad, warming his feet by the fire and his imagination by the wonder of the freshmen, "it is not what you learn in your classes that counts. It is the College Life. Books, lectures, recitations—you will forget all that. Nobody cares after you graduate whether you know any Latin or algebra, unless you are a teacher, and no man can afford to be a teacher nowadays. But you will remember the College Life as long as you live."

Some of the alumni would have a different story to tell, no doubt, but they do not get back often for fraternity initiations. Perhaps they are too busy. And, again, they may have been nothing but "grinds" during their college days.

Is high scholarship worth the effort? In other words, have colleges devised courses of study which bear any relation to the probable careers of their students? Is there any evidence that a man who attains high marks is more likely to achieve success after graduation than a man who is content with passing marks?

If there is any such connection between success in studies and success in life, it should be possible to measure it by approved statistical methods, and thus arrive at conclusions of more value as guidance to the undergraduate than the opinion of any man. Both the professor and the sport are in

danger of arguing from exceptional instances—each is likely to find striking cases in proof of his preconceived notions; each is inclined to scorn the opinion of the other.

But conclusions drawn from large numbers of cases, not subject to invalidating processes of selection, and employing terms that are adequately defined for the purpose at hand, must command the respect of all men. If such conclusions do not support the contention that it pays to study, there is something radically wrong with the professor's part of college affairs; different kinds of achievement should receive academic distinction and new tests should be devised. If, on the other hand, present standards for rating students predict their future success with any degree of accuracy, the facts should be discovered and used everywhere to combat the prevalent undergraduate opinion. Whatever the outcome of such studies, we should have them in larger numbers, in many places, protected by every safeguard of scientific method. We may well ask, first, whether promise in the studies of one period becomes performance in the studies of a later period.

Are good students in high-school more likely than others to become good students in college? Prof. Walter F. Dearborn tried to answer that question for the State of Wisconsin. He compared the records of hundreds of students at the University of Wisconsin with their records in various high-schools. He found that above eighty per cent. of those who were in the first quarter of their high-school classes remained in the upper half of their classes throughout the four years of their university course, and that above eighty per cent. of those who were in the lowest quarter in their high-school classes failed to rise above the line of mediocre scholarship in the university. The parallelism is so striking that we are justified in concluding that, except in scattering cases, promise in the high-school becomes performance in the college. Indeed, only one student out of nearly five hundred in this investigation who fell among the lowest quarter in the high-school attained the highest rank in the university.

Of course, a boy may loaf in high-school and take his chance of being the one exception among five hundred. But he would hardly be taking a sporting chance; it would be rather a fool's chance. The risk would be less in going over Niagara Falls in a barrel.

The University of Chicago found that high-school students who failed to attain an average rank higher than the passing mark, by at least twenty-five per cent. of the difference between that passing mark and one hundred, failed in their college classes. The faculty therefore decided not to admit such students. Exceptions were made of the most meritorious cases, but few of these exceptions made satisfactory records in the college.

Basing its policy upon such evidence as this, Reed College, at the beginning of its work five years ago, decided to admit, as a rule, only students who ranked in the first third of their preparatory-school classes. Some exceptions have been made. Twenty per cent. of those admitted were known to be below the first third, and two per cent. below the median line. In all cases these candidates were regarded as the most promising of those who fell below the first third in high-school rank, yet almost without exception they have failed to rise above the lowest quarter of their college classes. Thus, it appears that in Oregon, as in Wisconsin and Illinois, those who get the best start in the lower schools maintain their advantage in the upper schools; few of their classmates overtake them.

But why strive for high rank in college? Why not wait for the more "practical" studies of the professional school? Hundreds of boys the country over declare to-day that it makes little difference whether they win high grades or merely passable grades in the liberal arts, since these courses have no definite bearing on their intended life-work. Almost invariably they are ready to admit that they must settle down to serious effort in the studies of law, medicine, engineering—that is to say, in professional schools. Even the sport who makes the grade of mediocrity his highest aim as a college

undergraduate, fully intends to strive for high scholarship in his professional studies. Does he often attain that aim? That is the question.

And that, fortunately, is a question we may answer with more than opinions. We may take, for example, all the students who graduated from Harvard College during a period of twelve years and entered the Harvard Medical School. Of the 239 who received no distinction as undergraduates, 36 per cent. graduated with honor from the Medical School. Of the 41 who received degrees of A.B. with high honor, more than 92 per cent. took their medical degrees with honor.

Still more conclusive are the records of the graduates of Harvard College who during a period of twenty years entered the Harvard Law School. Of those who graduated from college with no special honor, only $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. attained distinction in the Law School. Of those who graduated with honor from the college, 22 per cent. attained distinction in the Law School; of those who graduated with great honor, 40 per cent.; and of those who graduated with highest honor, 60 per cent. Sixty per cent.! Bear that figure in mind a moment, while we consider the 340 who entered college "with conditions"—that is to say, without having passed all their entrance examinations—and graduated from college with plain degrees. Of these men, not 3 per cent. won honor degrees in law.

If a college undergraduate is ready to be honest with himself, he must say, "If I am content with mediocre work in college, it is likely that the men in my class who graduate with honor will have three times my chances of success in the Law School, and the men who graduate in my class with highest honor will have nearly ten times my chances for success." So difficult is it for a student to change his habits of life after the crucial years of college that not one man in twenty years—not one man in twenty years—who was satisfied in Harvard College with grades of "C" and lower gained distinction in the studies of the Harvard Law School.

The same relation appears to persist between the promise

of Yale undergraduates and their performance in the Harvard Law School. If we divide the 250 graduates of Yale who received their degrees in law at Cambridge between 1900 and 1915 into nine groups, according to undergraduate scholarship, beginning with those who won the highest "Senior Appointments" at Yale and ending with those who received no graduation honors, we find that the first group did the best work in their studies of law, the second group next, the third group next, and so on, in the same order, with but a single exception, to the bottom of the list. The performance at Harvard of each of the eight groups of Yale graduates was in precise accordance with the promise of their records at Yale.

Apparently the "good fellow" in college, the sport who does not let his studies interfere with his education, but who intends to settle down to hard work later on, and who later on actually does completely change his habits of life, is almost a myth. At least his record does not appear among those of thousands of students whose careers have been investigated under the direction of President Lowell and others. It seems that results are legal tender, but you cannot cash in on good intentions.

"Dignified credit to all," cries the bill-board. "Enjoy your new suit now, and pay for it later." Many a boy, lured by the instalment plan, expects to get an education on deferred payments in effort, only to find that there is no credit for him, dignified or otherwise. What his honest effort has paid for in full is his to-day; nothing more by any chance whatever.

But why strive for the highest standing in professional school? Let us pursue the inquiry one step further. Let us ask whether success in studies gives promise of success in life. As far as the study of law is concerned, we may answer at once that the known success of the honor graduates of the Harvard Law School is one reason why even college undergraduates at Cambridge believe that law students should study law—hard and seriously. For the same reason, leading

law-offices the country over give preference to honor graduates of law-schools.

But what is success in life? That is the first problem. It is one difficulty that confronts every one who attempts to speak with certainty about the meaning of education. There is no accepted definition of the aim of education. The philosopher has been likened to a blind man in a dark cellar hunting for a black cat that isn't there. The aim of education seems as elusive as the proverbial black cat. Nevertheless, we do not close our schools. We strive for concrete ends, such as proficiency in hand-writing, aware that any particular end may soon be regarded as not worth the effort to attain it. Until recently we could not say even what we meant by proficiency in handwriting, for we had not attempted to define our aim or devise a measure of our progress toward it. We still speak of educational processes and results about as accurately as the Indians spoke of temperature. We still speak of the science of education without seeming to understand that there is no science without precise measurement. From our fragmentary beginnings to an adequate science of education is a long journey, and the road is beset with difficulties. While we struggle along this road, generations will come and go. We will help them to attain what seem, for the time, the proper aims of education. And each individual will strive for what seems to him success in life.

As one measure of success in life, we may take the judgment of certain men. In so far as we accept their judgment our findings concerning the relation between college studies and this kind of success will seem important to us. Here, as in most questions of educational aim, we can do no better for the present than take the consensus of opinion of competent judges.

Using this measure for success, I endeavored to find out whether the members of the class of 1894 of Harvard College who had become notable in their life-work had been notable in their studies. I therefore asked three judges to select, independently, the most successful men from that

class. I chose as judges the dean of the college, the secretary of the Alumni Association, and a professor in Columbia University who is a member of the class, because I thought that these men came nearer than any others to knowing all members of the class. I left each judge free to use his own definition of success, but I asked them not to select men whose achievement appeared to be due principally to family, wealth or position. The judges agreed in naming twenty-three successful men. I then had the entire undergraduate records of these men accurately copied from the college records and compared with the standing of twenty-three men chosen at random from the same class.

The result was striking. The men who were thus named as most successful attained in their college studies nearly four times as many highest grades as the random selection. To the credit of the successful men are 196 "A's"; to the credit of the other men, only 56.

Following a similar plan, three judges selected the most successful men among the graduates of the first twenty-four (1878-1901) classes from the University of Oregon. An examination of the scholarship records of these men showed that 53 per cent. had been good students and 17 per cent. had been weak students. Of the graduates who were not regarded as successful, 52 per cent. had been weak students and only 12 per cent. had been good students.

Similar results have been found by Prof. A. A. Potter, Dean of the Kansas State Agricultural College, in an unpublished study of the relationship between superiority in undergraduate scholarship and success in the practice of engineering as indicated by salaries received. The Director of the School of Forestry of Yale University has collected evidence of the same kind in an unpublished study of the graduates of the Yale School of Forestry. It appears that about ninety per cent. of the men who have had conspicuous success in the field of forestry were among the better students in their professional studies. President Thwing of Western Reserve University, the historian of higher education in America,

says that he has found no exception, in the records of any American college, to the general rule that those who achieve most before graduation are likely to achieve most after graduation.

The list of the first ten scholars of each of the classes that graduated from Harvard College in the sixth decade of the last century, as presented by William Roscoe Thayer, is a list of men eminent in every walk of life. Indeed, it is likely that the first quarter in scholarship of any school or college class will give to the world as many distinguished men as the other three-quarters.

What can we say in this connection of the 420 living graduates of the ten Wesleyan University classes from 1890 to 1899? Just this: Of the men in that group who graduated with highest honors, 60 per cent. are now regarded as distinguished either by *Who's Who in America* or by the judgment of their classmates; of those who were elected to Phi Beta Kappa—the scholarship honor society—30 per cent.; of those who won no superior honors in scholarship, only 11 per cent. Of the men now living who graduated from Wesleyan University between 1860 and 1889, 16 per cent. are listed in *Who's Who*; of those who received high honors in scholarship during this period, 50 per cent.; of those who attained no distinction as scholars, only 10 per cent.

From the records of 1,667 graduates of Wesleyan University, Professor Nicholson concludes that of the highest-honor graduates (the two or three leading scholars of each class) one out of two will become distinguished; of Phi Beta Kappa men, one out of three; of the rest, one out of ten.

Concerning the value of *Who's Who* as a criterion of success in life, we may say at least this, that it is a genuine effort, unwarping by commercial motives, to include the men and women who have achieved most worthy leadership in all reputable walks of life. Whatever flaws it may have, it is acknowledged to be the best list of names for such uses as we are now making of it—and such changes in the list as any

group of competent judges might make would not materially affect the general conclusions we have drawn.

In much that I have said about success I have used the mathematical term "chance," a term as far removed as any term could be from the popular notion of luck. If all these studies proved anything, they prove that there is a long chain of causal connections binding together the achievements of a man's life and explaining the success of a given moment. That is the non-skid chain that keeps him safe in slippery places. Luck is about as likely to strike a man as lightning, and about as likely to do him any good. The best luck a young man can have is the firm conviction that there is no such thing as luck, and that he will gain in life just about what he deserves, and no more. The man who is waiting around for something lucky to turn up has time to see a preparedness parade pass by him—the procession of those who have formed the habit of turning things up. In a saloon at a prairie station in Montana I saw a sign, "Luck beats science every time." That is the motto of the gambler and of every other fool. But all men who have won durable distinction are proof that science beats luck—science operating through the laws of heredity and habit.

Ruskin had no patience with people who talk about "the thoughtlessness of youth" indulgently. "I had infinitely rather hear of thoughtless old age," he declared, "and the indulgence due to *that*. When a man has done his work, and nothing can any way be materially altered in his fate, let him forget his toil, and jest with his fate, if he will; but what excuse can you find for wilfulness of thought at the very time when every crisis of future fortune hangs on your decisions? A youth thoughtless! when all the happiness of his home forever depends on the chances or the passions of an hour! A youth thoughtless! when the career of all his days depends on the opportunity of a moment. A youth thoughtless! when his every act is a foundation-stone of future conduct, and every imagination a fountain of life or death! Be thoughtless in *any* afteryears, rather than now."

Now let the student profit by the experiences of the thousands who have gone before and greet his next task with the words of Hotspur before the battle of Shrewsbury:

Oh, gentlemen, the time of life is short;
To spend that shortness basely were too long
If life did ride upon a dial's point,
Still ending at the arrival of an hour.

CHAPTER XI

DESCRIPTION

IMAGINATIVE WRITING

TO many people "imaginative writing" means writing of a world of Pucks and Ariels, Robin Hoods and Prester Johns, Cinderellas and Circes—a world that has little connection with the realities of their ordinary life. They repeat that they have no imagination and are concerned with everyday affairs rather than with dreams or imaginary experiences. As a matter of fact, imaginative writing is as necessary for the expression of the real and ordinary experiences of life as for the most fantastic fairy tales ever written. No matter how simple your experience—your impression of a barn or your emotion in a storm—you cannot share this experience with another person unless you can reach his imagination; can so use words that they will create the experience for him through his imagination.

This power of transmitting experiences to other human beings, vividly, intensely, is a valuable social distinction, whether it be in the smoking-room, the club, or the parlor. You may have no ambition to become a novelist, but you cannot escape the desire to let other people know how you feel, what you have seen, what you have done, what you think about your

friends or the weather or airplane flights. If you wish only to tell about the narrow escape you had driving in Sunday traffic, or of your struggle with an importunate book agent, you have a legitimate pleasure when you can tell your story well enough so that it does not bore your friend. You have a desire to express yourself, to convey at least a part of yourself, whether you speak only to intimate friends, or whether you wish to reach the world. If you belong among those persons who desire expression in creative writing, then the knowledge of method is a practical gain. If you intend to be a bond salesman, a landscape gardener, or a social worker, training in expression which is vivid as well as accurate is also a practical advantage.

The second advantage which comes automatically from the ability to express experiences adequately, is an increased enjoyment of the experiences themselves. In the first chapter, in the discussion of the part that writing plays in education, it was suggested that if you would write well, you must live intensely. Now the converse is also true. Practice in writing description or narration may develop your capacity for intense living. You develop more interest in people, their behavior, their motives, the ways in which they reveal themselves; you acquire more delight in your own varied response to any experience. A trip on the streetcar becomes an opportunity to speculate upon character hints in the manner, dress, and expression of your neighbors. A thunderstorm in the country becomes not merely a drenching but an interesting texture of sense impressions—change in color of foliage under storm light, the smell of rain on earth or grass—and perhaps

of a few emotional impressions such as fear, or excitement, or awe. Training in imaginative writing is, like training in any art, an approach to keener living. If you study painting, you develop a sense for details of form and color; if you study music, you develop a sense for rhythm and sound. Writing, because it deals with human experience of all kinds, has this possibility of enriching life in many directions. This increased enjoyment of living, then, should be a second result of imaginative writing.

The third consequence you may expect to follow from such writing is a new pleasure in reading. If you have experimented in describing a face, in recounting your first love affair, in planning a story, you understand better the purposes of an author, the difficulties he must overcome, the methods he uses to overcome them. You have acquired in some degree, great or small, the insight, the thrilled appreciation of a connoisseur. You are more sensitive to the turn of a phrase, the rhythm of a sentence, the revelation of character in a novel. On a new plane of understanding you enter the company of creative artists, and share their rich, varied, and poignant experience. Though you may have an intuitive feeling for music or sculpture or painting or poetry, yet the greater your own technical knowledge of any of these arts, the greater is your delight in the accomplishment of the artist.

DESCRIPTION

The first form of imaginative writing we shall take up is description. As we noted in an earlier chapter,

"description aims to make the imagination realize in shape, color, light, sound, odor; taste, and movement." It is a form of expression as inevitable as explaining and arguing, and is often subtly interwoven with them. Everyone sooner or later feels the urge to make others see and feel what charms or interests or horrifies him. He may wish to describe a car he has just bought, or a gorge he once saw in the Rockies; or she may want to give the effect of a hat in the shop window or of the lighting on the stage. He may be writing a letter in which he wishes to convey the emotional excitement of the critical basketball game of yesterday, or the way he felt when he ran his new car into a ditch. He may be writing an advertisement, part of the content of which must be description so accurate and so enticing that it will secure buyers for the object advertised. He may be concerned with purely expository material, where a flash of description will make readable his article on water power or the conditions in the Southern cotton mills, or his essay on the Roman military organization or the future of aviation. He may be seriously interested in the art of writing fiction, through which description plays like a searchlight, illuminating the persons and the scenes. Wherever he is, or whatever he does, so long as words are a medium of self-expression, he will find himself under the pressure of the necessity to describe.

The only way by which he may secure himself from this demand is to cease observing; to make of himself a mechanism which goes about deaf, blind, coldly insensible to the amazing drama of life. On the other hand, we become increasingly aware of things as we

try to recreate them by words or brush-strokes. Agassiz was a wise teacher when he set his student to drawing a specimen. After half a dozen rejected efforts, the boy settled down to the kind of accurate, detailed observation which Agassiz required. As a result, the student's sketch was his description of what he had seen. If you think that you are a fairly careful observer of detail, try to draw any simple object, and note how much more you see in it before you have finished your experiment.

EQUIPMENT FOR DESCRIPTION

Only as a person is alive to life as it passes by him, can he put it down on paper. Behind description is literally the personality of its writer. If you would describe something, test your own senses first to find out how alert they are. Take account of stock, and decide what you have in the way of natural equipment to start with. Then go on and develop your own sensitivity where it is weak; for to write description which will attract an audience, a writer must have the sort of originality which comes only from the development of his own sensitivity.

How can you tell which sense you habitually use in observation? Few people have all of the senses equally well developed. Consider for a moment some of the things which you really notice, not those which are pointed out to you, or which it happens to be the fad of the moment to emphasize.

1. Sight

Do you notice details with sight? What particular ones do you always take in? For example, of what details about people are you always aware? Do you habitually notice hands, so that after meeting a new person you have a distinct sense of what his hands look like? Do you notice eyes, or bearing, or clothes? When you are out of doors, what do you see? Test yourself at once by reviewing what you can remember seeing when you were out of doors to-day. How sharp are your images? How numerous? How clearly can you recall the colors? Without question not as clearly as a trained artist who had been over the same ground would recall them. And without question not as clearly as you are capable of recalling them. Two weeks of the same kind of intense training in visualization that an artist has would send you home with your mind full of line and color. Even the short experience of color in an art exhibit would send you out with a quickened awareness of color and line effects out of doors. For an hour or so things would look quite different.

Sometimes in a novel a single detail of sight will carry with it the complete power to evoke an emotion or a situation. For instance, the deep, cold violet color that settles down over the mountains in the late afternoon suggests a fall night with the first touch of winter in the air. The flat, white look of the sea suggests the heat of the day. The candid blue of a child's eyes makes you realize how touchingly inexperienced he is. Deepened lines, cutting down through leathered cheeks, give

you disillusioned age. In your use of visual details, try for those which really stir in you a significant association, which you would entirely miss if you were blind.

The east-bound train was ploughing through a January snow-storm; the dull dawn was beginning to show gray when the engine whistled a mile out of Newark. Paul started up from the seat where he had lain curled in uneasy slumber, rubbed the breath-misted window glass with his hand, and peered out.. The snow was whirling in curling eddies above the white bottom lands, and the drifts lay already deep in the fields and along the fences, while here and there the long dead grass and dried weed stalks protruded black above it. Lights shone from the scattered houses and a gang of laborers who stood beside the track waved their lanterns.*

Note the use of color here—gray, white, black, and shining lights. Notice the effect of motion in the picture of the storm. The details, few but definite, create the scene.

In Conrad's story, *The Lagoon*, you have a continuous picture of the background against which the characters move. Much of this is visual, with an occasional note of sound. See how the little house is picked out sharply against the sky:

The creek broadened, opening out into a wide sweep of stagnant lagoon. The forests receded from the marshy bank, leaving a level strip of bright green, reedy grass to frame the reflected blueness of the sky. A fleecy pink cloud drifted high above, trailing the delicate coloring of its image under the floating leaves and silvery blossoms of the lotus. A little house, perched on high piles, appeared black in the distance.†

* From Willa Cather, *Youth and the Bright Medusa*. Alfred Knopf.

† From Joseph Conrad, *The Lagoon*. Doubleday, Doran & Company.

Notice the action in this description of a crowd in an amusement park:

Within the Merry-Go-Round there was a whirling circle of ornamental lions, giraffes, camels, ponies, goats, glittering with varnish and metal that caught swift reflections from the windows high above them. With stiff wooden legs, they swept on in a never-ending race, while a great orchestrion clamored in wild speed. The summer sunlight sprinkled its gold upon the garnet canopies carried by the tireless racers and upon all the devices of decoration that made Stimson's machine magnificent and famous. A host of laughing children bestrode the animals, bending forward like charging cavalrymen, and shaking reins and whooping in glee. At intervals they leaned out perilously to clutch at iron rings that were tendered to them by a long wooden arm. At the intense moment before the swift grab for the rings one could see their little nervous bodies quiver with eagerness; the laughter rang shrill and excited. Down in the long rows of benches crowds of people sat watching the game, while occasionally a father might arise and go near to shout encouragement, cautionary commands, or applause at his flying offspring.*

Without selection of any special characters, Stephen Crane gives the reader an impression of movement, of excitement, of a holiday crowd. Notice the effect of swiftness which you get from the sight detail, "bending forward like charging cavalrymen," and the suggestion of emotion when "their little nervous bodies quiver with eagerness." If you have ridden on a merry-go-round in your childhood, you relive those minutes in this description.

In Coffin's *Lost Paradise* the boy goes down to the wharf at night to see the men bring in the boat load

* From Stephen Crane, *Men, Women and Beasts*. Alfred Knopf.

of fish. Here Coffin makes us see color in darkness and he makes us see it in motion. The men pulled the net in; then:

They turned it out into the dory, and the whole boat bottom flashed with a white mess of living fire, bright as the lantern light. Then the men rowed away into the dark.

Peter could see them at his father's wharf. His father's moustache was edged with fire as he set up the lanterns on the poles over the sorting table. The whole wharf twinkled with starry scales of fish. . . . They flowed over the sides of the wharf into the water. Sculpins, flounders with white bellies, here and there the green agony that was an eel. The three men were knee deep in silver. They bent and sorted with six quick hands. The piles of big smelts and small smelts spread out wider on the tables. The silver stuck to the men's palms and boots and trousers.*

Again when he sees the heron in the pool, he makes us realize the bird not only as he stands still in the water, but as a flash of living color.

You might come upon a heron, looking lonely as the world was before there were any boys or men around, dozing at noonday over a sheet of salty silver. You did not make a sound, but all at once he was off. He flashed blue fire, as he let go with the triggers of both wings, and sailed off with his crest back on his shoulders like a king's crown and his long legs trailing.

When Anne Lindbergh flew from her summer home in Maine north to the Orient, she looked down on the place which she had known through her life, and gathered it all together in a complete whole.

*From R. P. T. Coffin, *Lost Paradise*. By permission of the Macmillan Co.

The day was hard and clear and bright, like the light slanting off a white farmhouse. The island falling away under us as we rose in the air lay still and perfect, cut out in starched clarity against a dark sea. I had the keenest satisfaction in embracing it all with my eye. It was mine as though I held it, an apple in my hand. All the various parts of it were mine at the same moment; the crowd on the pier, the little rocking boat in the harbor where my family waved, the white farmhouse on the point where my baby was.*

2. Sound

Suppose a deaf man's hearing were suddenly restored to him. How many sounds of which we are never conscious would beat upon his ears! Test yourself to discover how keen and how discriminating your sense of hearing is. Listen from the place where you are sitting at this moment and note how many details of sound you are conscious of. Consider a far noisier place, like Fifth Avenue or Main Street. Of how many separate noises are you aware in such a place? And as you think of the street, is it the way it looks or the way it sounds that is recorded in your mind? Are you aware of small sounds when you are in the woods? The note of the chickadee or the hermit thrush; the sound of a broken twig; the far-off whistle of a train; the padding of your own footsteps. Or do you, as you recall the woods, have a sense only of how they looked? If you are describing them, how large an audience will you have if you do it in terms only of sight? Cultivate your ear.

Consider the power of suggestion of a single sound

*From Anne Lindbergh, *North to the Orient*. By permission of Harcourt, Brace & Co.

detail. Such power can be tested best by eliminating the possibility of the use of sight through the darkness. What sinister import the sound of creaking stairs brings to the lonely occupant of an old house! The wail of cats on roof tops suggests night in the city; the bark of a dog from a distance, the quiet of the country; the rattle of the milk cart at dawn, the final irritation of a sleepless night. Back in the eighteenth century Lady Winchelsea noticed how much louder the running of the brook sounded at night. Often in a description, details of sound, seemingly trivial, will heighten the sense of reality for the very reason that they make the reader aware of the noises which had struck his ears, although at the time he had scarcely realized them.

Stephen Crane ends his description of Stimson's Mammoth Merry-Go-Round with sound details. After the sentence in which he suggests fatherly shouts, he continues:

Frequently mothers called out: "Be careful, Georgia!" The orchestrion bellowed and thundered on its platform, filling the ears with its long monotonous song. Over in a corner, a man in a white apron and behind a counter roared above the tumult: "Pop corn! Pop corn!"

E. M. Forster, in *A Passage to India*, is describing the Marabar caves. After giving a visual impression, he says:

There was also a terrifying echo. . . . There are some exquisite echoes in India; there is the whisper round the dome at Bijapur; there are the long, solid sentences that voyage through the air at Mandu, and return unbroken to their creator. The echo in a Marabar cave is not like these;

it is entirely devoid of distinction. Whatever is said, the same monotonous noise replies, and quivers up and down the walls until it is absorbed into the roof. "Boum" is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or "bou-oum," or "ou-boum"—utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeak of a boot, all produce "boum." Even the striking of a match starts a little worm coiling, which is too small to complete a circle but is eternally watchful. And if several people talk at once, an overlapping howling noise begins, echoes generate echoes, and the cave is stuffed with a snake composed of small snakes, which writhe independently.*

Forster's use of figures, as well as his concreteness, as he conveys to you the sound of this echo, is worth study: "the little worm coiling" for the small sound of the match, and "the writhing snakes" for the confusion of noises.

In *The Time of Man*, Ellen hears sounds in the June night:

She heard a mocking bird singing in the bushes out toward the lane, singing a futile song which reiterated its uselessness and changed its hollow phrases from moment to moment. The sound fell flat upon a flat air.

"That old mock-bird. I wish he'd shut up," she whispered.

If the song had sorrow or wistfulness in it, or any lightness or joy or form, these took place in some other medium than the world of that dusk. The shallow jargon beat upon her pained ears and made no tone. Behind the hard vibrations of this singing the evening seemed very still and very long. She heard the cattle come down to the creek to drink, heard them slopping in the water and pulling at the locust sprouts beyond the fence.†

* From E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*. Harcourt, Brace & Company.

† From Elizabeth Madox Roberts, *The Time of Man*. Copyright 1926, by the Viking Press, Inc., New York.

Notice how the effect of the sounds upon Ellen sets the mood of the description.

3. *Smell*

How keen is your sense of smell? So little do we depend on that sense in our modern life that few people realize how dull it usually is. Perhaps city dwellers learn to subdue it as a means of self-protection. But in its loss they deny themselves one path of experience, and those paths are few. Can you smell the fog, its salt, thick odor as it rolls in from the ocean? Do you know when the wind turns east by that same sea smell which comes so incongruously up a crowded Broadway? If you wish to describe a fog, what more vivid detail can you give of it than its odor? Are you aware of the approach of a snowstorm by the smell of snow in the air? It is there, quite unmistakably, for the keen scented. Have you ever noticed the characteristic tang of different cities, or parts of cities? Blindfolded, one could recognize the city of Constantinople or the shipping district of Boston known as Atlantic Avenue. Test yourself and decide the odors to which you are most susceptible. Are they the obvious and pungent ones, or are you conscious of the faint wraith of a scent which marks keen sensitivity?

Perhaps no other sense has the power to create so complete a structure as does that of smell. Can you smell a fresh apple pie hot from the oven, or newly baked bread, without experiencing a sharp sense of home on a Saturday morning? The odor of grape jelly and piccalilli cooking on the stove suggests the autumn

with October wind whipping the leaves about in the sunlight. The pungent smell of tomato vines pricks the fingers with the feel of the rough stems as one gathers the cold fruit to save it from early frost. A whiff of clam mud sets a scene of a becalmed sail boat with the sailors wading ashore. The faintest odor of ether will almost achieve an operation for some people. The smell of fresh linen dried in the sun imparts a feeling of cool cleanliness. The stuffy mustiness of old churches recalls droning hymns and interminable sermons. Wood smoke lets you out of doors. The choking stench of gasoline puts you down in the crowded street. The salt tang of seaweed in the sun at low tide creates the peace of a wide, empty beach and a quiet bay. The sense of smell is an invaluable factor in its contribution to descriptive writing.

Still to taste the warm sunlight that melted in your mouth ; still to smell the white waxy scent that lay upon the jonquil fields and the wild spicy scent of the rosemary growing in little tufts among the red rocks close to the brim of the sea.

This is a note in Katherine Mansfield's journal, a recollection of happiness in terms of odors.

William Beebe, in *Jungle Peace*, speaks of the odors of the jungle :

Months of work in the open had sharpened my nostrils so that on such a tramp as this they were not much inferior to those of Nupee. This sense gave me as keen pleasure as eye or ear, and furnished quite as much information. The odors of city and civilization seemed very far away : gasoline, paint, smoke, perfumery, leather—all these could hardly be recalled. And how absurd seemed society's taboo on dis-

cussion of this admirable but pitifully degenerate sense! Why may you look at your friend's books, touch his collection of *netsukes*, listen to his music, yet dare sniff at naught but his blossoms!

In the open spaces of the earth, and more than anywhere in this conservatory of unblown odors, we come more and more to appreciate and envy a dog's sensitive muzzle. Here we sniffed as naturally as we turned ear, and were able to recognize many of our nasal impressions, and even to follow a particularly strong scent to its source. Few yards of trail but had their distinguishable scent, whether violent, acrid smell or delectable fragrance. Long after a crab-jackal had passed, we noted the stinging, bitter taint in the air; and now and then the pungent wake of some big jungle-bug struck us like a tangible barrier.

The most tantalizing odors were the wonderfully delicate and penetrating ones from some great burst of blossoms, odors heavy with sweetness, which seeped down from vine or tree high overhead, wholly invisible from below even in broad daylight. These odors remained longest in memory, perhaps because they were so completely the product of a single sense. There were others, too, which were unforgettable, because, like the voice of the frog, they stirred the memory a fraction before they excited curiosity. Such I found the powerful musk from the bed of leaves which a fawn had just left. For some reason this brought vividly to mind the fearful compound of smells arising from the decks of Chinese junks.

Along the moonlit trail there came wavering whiffs of orchids, ranging from attar of roses and carnations to the pungence of carrion, the latter doubtless distilled from as delicate and beautiful blossoms as the former. There were, besides, the myriad and bewildering smells of sap, crushed leaves, and decaying wood, acrid, sweet, spicy, and suffocating, some like musty books, others recalling the paint on the Noah's Ark of one's nursery.*

*From William Beebe, *Jungle Peace*. Henry Holt & Company.

This excerpt is particularly valuable because the author has recognized the significance of odor. Notice the words he uses to describe the different scents.

Willa Cather uses an odor to suggest the coming of spring, an odor full of association:

Everywhere now there was the smell of burning grass. Our neighbors burned off their pasture before the new grass made a start, so that the fresh growth would not be mixed with the dead stand of last year. Those light, swift fires, running about the country, seemed a part of the same kindling that was in the air.*

4. *Taste*

The sense of taste is so closely connected with the sense of smell that dullness of the one argues slow response in the other. Without doubt few of us are gifted with that sharpness of perception which is part of the equipment of a tea taster. The epicure is frowned upon, but after all he is using what most of us ignore, one of the avenues of approach to experience. This sense is less useful in description than most of the others. It is amusing to note in some of the popular stories which deal with the menus of dinner parties that the authors seem to have found a paucity of appetizing words.

Taste has, however, that same power of creating or restoring a situation which is characteristic of the other senses. If you bite into a green apple to-day, its sour and puckery taste may not give you the pleasure that it used to, but it serves to make you remember that pleasure and possibly the resultant pains. Merely

* From Willa Cather, *My Antonia*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

to remember the taste of castor oil calls up the sight of the room where you received the dose and the wicked size of the spoon on its way to your mouth. Although taste is difficult to describe, it can be made an interesting part of description by its power of association.

Willa Cather uses the sense of taste to convey the impression of the wind:

The wind had the burning taste of fresh snow; my throat and nostrils smarted as if someone had opened a hartshorn bottle. The cold stung, and at the same time delighted one.*

Marcel Proust, in the Overture to *Swann's Way*, offers a passage devoted to a careful study of the associations linked with the sensation of taste:

Many years had elapsed during which nothing of Combray . . . had any existence for me, when one day in winter, as I came home, my mother seeing that I was cold offered me some tea, a thing I did not ordinarily take. I declined at first, and then for no particular reason, changed my mind. She sent out for one of those short, plump little cakes called '*petites madeleines*,' which look as though they had been moulded in the fluted scallop of a pilgrim's shell. And soon mechanically, weary after a dull day with the prospect of a depressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid, and the crumbs with it, touched my palate than a shudder ran through my whole body, and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary changes that were taking place. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, but individual, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. . . . Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? I was conscious that it was connected with the taste of tea and cake, but that it infinitely transcended

* From Willa Cather, *My Antonia*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

those savours, could not, indeed, be of the same nature as theirs. Whence did it come? . . . How could I seize upon it and define it?

I drink a second mouthful, in which I find nothing more than in the first, a third, which gives me rather less than the second. It is time to stop; the potion is losing its magic. It is plain that the object of my quest, the truth, lies not in the cup but in myself. The tea has called up in me, but does not itself understand, and can only repeat indefinitely with a gradual loss of strength, the same testimony. . . . I put down the cup and examine my own mind. It is for me to discover the truth. . . . I place in position before my mind's eye the still recent taste of that first mouthful, and I feel something start within me, something that leaves its resting-place and attempts to rise, something that has been imbedded like an anchor at a great depth. . . .

Undoubtedly what is thus palpitating in the depths of my being must be the image, the visual memory which, being linked to that taste, has tried to follow it into my conscious mind. . . .

Will it ultimately reach the clear surface of my consciousness, this memory, this old dead moment which the magnetism of an identical moment has travelled so far to importune, to disturb? . . .

And suddenly the memory returns. The taste was that of the little crumb of *madeleine* which on Sunday mornings at Combray, when I went in to say good day to her in her bedroom, my aunt Leonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of real or of lime-flower tea. The sight of the little *madeleine* had recalled nothing to my mind before I tasted it; perhaps because I had so often seen such things in the interval without tasting them. . . . But when, from a long distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, still, alone, more fragile, but with more vitality, more unsubstantial, more persistent, more faithful, the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls, ready to remind us,

waiting and hoping for their moment, amid the ruins of all the rest. . . .

And once I had recognized the taste of the crumb of *madeleine* soaked in her decoction of lime-flowers which my aunt used to give me, immediately the old grey house upon the street . . . rose up like the scenery of a theatre, . . . and with the house the town.*

5. Touch

The sense of touch is extraordinarily important in gathering details which make for vivid description. That it can be developed to such a degree that it compensates for the loss of our most used sense, sight, is proved by the blind man's ability to get the whole reality of appearance through the fingers. The fingers of the sculptor likewise must possess a feeling for texture and planes which is quite beyond the comprehension of the layman. Test your sense of touch by making a blindfolded examination of a piece of sculpture. How much can you tell of its significance? Try yourself on a piece of mechanism and see what it means to you. If you can manage the experiment, move your fingers over a face which is familiar to you through sight. Blindfolded, could you recognize it?

When you describe the feeling of a cold shower after exercise, you may suggest the whole preceding game with its suspense and final success. The sharpness of your realization of a warm room is heightened by the contrast with the blizzard through which you have just struggled; you feel the one experience through the other. In describing the one you make use

* From Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*. Albert & Charles Boni.

of the other. If you are describing the experience of sleeping out of doors, not the least of your details is concerned with the scratchiness of the woolen blankets. The soft, cool feeling of deep grass suggests the simmering heat of a summer's day that makes that coolness grateful to you. The touch of a dog's cold wet nose on your hand is utterly unlike the feeling of an equally cold wet rag. Try to find out what certain contacts with your skin really do to you, and you may be able to describe them with the kind of significant reality which will arouse the same sensations in other people.

E. M. Forster uses a small detail of feeling so sharply that it serves as a symbol of a country:

Nevertheless, walking fatigued him, as it fatigues everyone in India except the new-comer. There is something hostile in that soil. It either yields, and the foot sinks into a depression, or else it is unexpectedly rigid and sharp, pressing stones or crystals against the tread. A series of these little surprises exhausts, and he was wearing pumps, a poor preparation for any country.*

The response to atmosphere is an important element in your experience of any scene—dampness, dryness, heat, cold. Notice Miss Roberts' use of this experience:

She was coming in from the farthest part of the yard in the dusk, walking about in the warm languorous air. The stars were out, very low and very near, pushing down, falling out of humid weight. The air scarcely moved at all, but now and then a warmer motion spread down from the higher places, pushing through skin and lying along the inner threads of nerves, fiddling on delicate quick with familiar searching hands. She walked into a tree before she was

* From E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*. Harcourt, Brace & Company.

aware of it. Its great trunk spread against her breast like a broad chest upon her.*

And in a later passage, when Ellen is working in the fields, the physical sensations of conflict with the soil are rendered in their simplicity and concreteness so powerfully as to create in the reader the sense of weariness, exhaustion:

But the mere weight of the clods, as she knew them, as she leaned over them, was a strength to destroy her strength. There, present, the heaviness of the clods pulled at her arms and the field seemed to reach very far before it stopped at the pool by the quarry. The straggling grass, matted into the soil, clung about the plants here and there and scarcely yielded to the two or three blows of the tool. She felt the weight of the grass as she tore it away, and now and then a blow so sharp that it made her flanks ache was needed to turn the soil. The field had been neglected, for the summer rains had lasted overlong. She ceased to think of any day before this day or of any task before this. Each plant freed of weeds was something liberated, but another stood trammled, the same endlessly snared, the same, until she tramped a treadmill and her thought was clodded with earth. The sun was warm on her aching shoulders and her strong knees quivered with the strain.

When Anne Lindbergh tells in *North to the Orient*,* of the dark coming on at Nome and the necessity for a quick landing, she makes us share the experience by giving us the details as she felt them:

We must land before that last thread of light had gone. Down, down, down, the cold air whistling through the cowl-

* From Elizabeth Madox Roberts, *The Time of Man*. Copyright, 1926, by The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

† Published by Harcourt, Brace and Company. Quoted by permission.

ings as we dived toward the lagoon. I must wind in the antenna before we hit the water. The muscles in my arms stiffened to soreness turning the wheel at top speed, as though I were reeling in a gigantic fish from the bottom of the sea. One more turn—*jiggle*, *snap*, the ball-weight clicked into place—all wound up, safe. Now—brace yourself for the landing. How *can* he see anything! Spank, spank, spank. There we go—I guess we're all right! But the ship shot on through the water—on and on. Must have landed "down wind." Now it eased up a little. There, I sighed with relief. We were taxiing toward that dark indistinct line ahead—a shore.

Then later when she was taking a short trip from New York, where she had no responsibilities and felt no danger, she tells us how the flying made her feel:

I could sit quite still and let the roar of the engine cover me like music. Throbbing with small monotone patterns, the vibration hummed in the soles of my feet, in the hollow of my back. It absorbed some restless side of me, and was satisfying as a hearth fire or rain on the roof. Contented, I could look down at that calm clear world below.

6. *Combination of Senses*

Why do we say, "*See* what it means to you"? How has *see* come to be used as a general term of recognition? Because we recognize almost entirely by sight. If, when you have carefully tested yourself, you find that you gain almost all of your experience through sight, suppose you start in on the other senses to make them contribute their share toward the rich birthright of living which is absolutely essential to you if you are to write. Recapture that early sensitivity which

made life so interesting when you were very young. As a child knows reality from things he guesses at, only by trying it out for himself with his senses, so you as a writer can increase your experience and sharpen its significance by the same method.

In this simple account of milking cows Miss Cather gains vividness by an appeal to several senses:

We brought the cows home to the corner nearest the barn, and the boys milked them while night came on. Everything was as it should be: the strong smell of sunflowers and ironweed in the dew, the clear blue and gold of the sky, the evening star, the purr of the milk into the pails, the grunts and squeals of the pigs fighting over their supper. I began to feel the loneliness of the farm-boy at evening, when the chores seem everlastingly the same, the world so far away.*

Here is a thunderstorm, given with the same complete awareness of sensation:

The thunder was loud and metallic, like the rattle of sheet iron, and the lightning broke in great zigzags across the heavens, making everything stand out and come close to us for a moment. Half the sky was checkered with black thunderheads, but all the west was luminous and clear: in the lightning flashes it looked like deep blue water, with the sheen of moonlight on it; and the mottled part of the sky was like marble pavement, like the quay of some splendid sea-coast city doomed to destruction. Great warm splashes of rain fell on our upturned faces. One black cloud, no bigger than a little boat, drifted out into the clear space untended, and kept moving westward. All about us we could hear the felty beat of the raindrops on the soft dust of the farmyard.†

* From Willa Cather, *My Antonia*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

† From the same.

What is the effect of the word *felty*? Such a word comes only as the result of fresh and precise observation.

In *The Little French Girl*, Alix speaks of the goldfinches from which the château is named:

Flocks come in autumn to the thistles on the cliffs outside our gates. When they all fly together one sees the squares of gold on their wings—it makes a pattern on the sky, like a chain of golden coins; Monsieur de Maubert's strange old square coins. And their little twitter is like the chink of thin gold. We love them, Maman and I; and there is a tall ash tree in the garden where they often perch in summer.*

Notice the way in which the one detail of sound heightens the following picture:

No one suggested an inoculation against Sicily in February, a charm to ward off a first attack of love—first love, spring love, delicate as almond blossoms against the snowy distant slopes of Etna; breath-taking and precipitous as the drop from the terrace where Taormina lay, down to the wrinkled blue of the Mediterranean; poignant and inescapable as the thin notes of the pipe the old beggar in the sun outside her window shook all day into the thin air.†

The delicacy and magic of first love are suggested by the sight details, but its quickening effect comes with the poignant notes of the beggar's pipe.

She peered out of her window vaguely. Too dark to see anything to-night. Voices under her window, and laughter, and fragrance like an overtone above the faint, acrid smell of the street.

* From Anne Douglas Sedgwick, *The Little French Girl*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

† From Helen Hull, "*Molto Buono*."

Here the sight details have been eliminated by darkness, but the impression of the night comes sharply through sounds and odors.

She climbed at last up the blossom-scented path and turning, one hand arched above her eyes against the sunlight, looked across the tender, magic cup of the valley below Taormina, where cypresses and olive trees and swiftly fading almond blooms accented the hillside, where the distant sea crept with white lip up to the land; beyond to the slope of Etna, amazing, dazzling white against the blue sky, with the long plume of sun-silvered smoke blown inland by the faint sea breeze.

The sense of sight in this description is sharpened by the suggestion of movement through the foaming of the sea and the drift of volcanic smoke. The odor of the flowers captures another sense:

She woke to a room full of fragrant dusk, the wind from the sea lifting on its salt edge the burden of almond blossoms, of freesias, and the minor half notes of the piper's song all about her—*tu-li*—woke drowsy with a sense of exquisite dreams scattering like—like goats with tiny hoofs.

The sense of sight is dropped, and we depend upon the fragrance of the sea and garden odors, and on the sound of the flute and scattering goats to reconstruct the scene.

When the Lindberghs landed at Point Barrow after pushing through cold fog, the natives came out to greet them. Note how the sense details draw you, the reader, into the actual experience; and how the contrast between the bleak outdoors and the home sharpens that experience:

As we climbed up the bank the crowd of Eskimos drew back, an attitude of respect and wonder never seen in the usual crowd. As they moved a great cry arose—not a shout, but a slow deep cry of welcome. Something in it akin to the bleak land and the ice pack.

Then, after shaking of hands and a confusion of voices, I found myself running across the icy moss toward a lighted frame house. My hostess, the doctor's wife, was leading me. I stamped my numb feet on the wooden steps of her home as she pushed open the door. The warmth of a kitchen fire, the brightness of gas lamps, and a delicious smell of sweet potatoes and freshly baked muffins poured out around me and drew me in.

A long table spread for our "Thanksgiving dinner" filled the living room. White cloth, rims of plates, curves of spoons, caught the light from the swinging lamps above. I looked around quickly and felt the flavor of an American home—chinz curtains drawn aside, pictures of "woodland scenes" on the walls, bright pillows on the sofa, and there, in the window, a box of climbing nasturtiums.*

Then at the end of the book comes the author's comment on the magic of flying which allows her to sit still and look at life from the air:

For not only is life put in new patterns from the air, but it is somehow arrested, frozen into form. The leaping hare is caught in a marble panel. A glaze is put over life. There is no flaw, no crack in the surface; a still reservoir, no ripple on its face. Looking down from the air that morning, I felt that stillness rested like a light over the earth. The waterfalls seemed frozen solid; the tops of the trees were still; the river hardly stirred, a serpent gently moving under its shimmering skin. Every thing was quiet; fields and trees and houses. What motion there was, took on a slow grace: the crawling cars, the rippling skin of the river, the birds

*From Anne Lindbergh, *North to the Orient*. By permission of Harcourt, Brace & Co.

drifting like petals down the air; like slow-motion pictures which catch the moment of outstretched beauty—a horse at the top of a jump—that one cannot see in life itself, so swiftly does it move.

And if flying, like a glass-bottomed bucket, can give you that vision, that seeing eye, which peers down to the still world below the choppy waves—it will always remain magic.

Reread the line: "Looking down from the air that morning, I felt that stillness rested like a light over the earth." Sight and sound and touch have been called upon to give you beauty of impression. It is, like much of Anne Lindbergh's prose, a line of poetry.

EXERCISE

Try to describe, using one sense only, one of the following:

A locker-room.

A Scout's camp.

A college dining-hall.

A ferry boat docking at the slip.

A flower garden in April. In August.

The interior of an animal shop.

The edge of a beach at low tide.

A laboratory.

Note the increased richness of detail which you extract from the one sense on which you are dependent. Note also how your description loses in richness of general effect by that very limitation.

SELECTION OF DETAIL

When you have developed in all directions this sensitivity to impressions of touch, taste, sight, sound, smell,

you may find yourself bewildered by the richness of descriptive material. You realize that in describing a scene or a person it is impossible to include all of your sense impressions. The effect would be that of a catalog or of a chaotic assembling of small details. How, then, are you to choose from all these details those particular ones which will transfer to your reader the vivid impression you yourself hold?

The first principle which determines your selection of detail is your purpose, your aim. Perhaps you wish to give a scientific account of some object, accurately observed. A handbook of birds gives the following account of the purple grackle:

Length, 12 to 13 inches: width, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Colors of the adult male, brilliant, bluish-black on head, neck, throat, and upper breast; under parts duller. Habits—Collect in large flocks during the migrating season. One of the earliest of arrivals in spring. Note, harsh and creaky.

The details of this account are selected for the purpose of exact identification of the bird. The object is to enable you to recognize the bird when you see it. The details convey no feeling about the bird, nor do they give you any impression of his place in the world of spring.

Turn now to Amy Lowell's treatment of the same bird. It is filled with her enjoyment of the arrival of the grackles, and she is able to convey that pleasure to the reader. She not only gives you a picture of the birds, but she gives you their place in the spring. She is not interested in helping you to identify the grackle;

she wishes to share her experience of the birds. Good description amounts to this sharing of experience.

PURPLE GRACKLES *

The grackles have come.
The smoothness of the morning is puckered with
their incessant chatter.
A sociable lot, these purple grackles.
Thousands of them strung across a long run of wind,
Thousands of them beating the air-ways with
quick wing-jerks,
Spinning down the currents of the South.

I am persuaded that grackles are birds;
But when they are settled in the trees,
I am inclined to declare them fruits,
And the trees turned hybrid blackberry vines.
Blackness shining and bulging under leaves,
Does not that mean blackberries, I ask you?
Nonsense! The grackles have come.

You have some of the same details—color, habit, voice.
But what a difference in effect!

Look up the account of the common lilac in your botany, or in a seed catalog. Compare this with Amy Lowell's poem, *Lilacs*. Refer to the account of the grasshopper in any entomology, and compare this with Leigh Hunt's poem, *The Grasshopper*. Compare a Baedeker account of Constantinople with H. G. Dwight's *Constantinople, Settings and Traits*.

The first principle of selection, then, is set by the purpose of your description. You omit facts which do

* From Amy Lowell, *What's O'Clock?* Houghton Mifflin Company.

not assist in conveying your own impression. You select the details which vivify that impression.

Since it is almost always an emotional effect for which you are working in description, you must keep in mind the selective power of mood or preoccupation of the observer. A raven, to a farmer, is a raucous nuisance that pulls up his corn. To Poe, because of his mood as he watched it, it became a symbol of all that was ominous and melancholy. It is the same bird but a different mood.

Have you ever watched how your mood or your physical condition determines what you see? Suppose that you are in a street car; you have just lost the job which was exactly what you wanted; you have lost it through some stupid mistake of your own. The car is crowded with people who look not only dull but distinctly disagreeable. The air is unbearable, the light glaring; the grating of the wheels scours your nerves; the staring advertisements are silly and vulgar.

Suppose on the contrary that you have just been promoted to greater responsibility and increased salary through some effort which your chief pronounces highly commendable. Construct for yourself the frame of mind which will induce an entirely different set of details. What do you see now? What do you hear? Are you aware of bad air? Is the crowd any longer hateful? Are the lights anything more than a celebration for your joyous mood?

Consider how the sight and odor of a good dinner affect you when you have just come in from a long walk on a cold day. How does the food look, smell, taste, compared with that same dinner when you are

just coming down with a sick headache? How would your description of college on the day you passed your examinations compare with it on the day that you failed? What you see in people and places is determined by your mood. Since you wish to convey an emotional impression in your descriptions, if you will observe the way in which mood determines what you observe, and use that natural process in your selection, you will approach more nearly the end you desire.

The man who rides a hobby hard sees details as they are related to that hobby. The golfer would describe the beauty of the day in terms of the advantages it offered for golf. He would see the shop windows which displayed golf accessories. He would mark the seasons as they favored or thwarted his game. The material of a description is always limited by individual equipment or preoccupation. The plumber who likes his work and is more or less absorbed in it, sees in the new buildings which go up systems of piping, security of water pressure, the latest kind of faucets. The artist looks at those buildings and comments on their skyline, the proportions, the effect of the windows in the setting sun. A dressmaker can come home from church with little memory of the sermon but with a very accurate impression of the gowns in the neighborhood of her pew. People who travel abroad often see very little except what reminds them of home or shocks them by contrast. A new interest of your own immediately makes you observe details which have hitherto been outside the rim of your consciousness. If you are given a puppy, you become aware of other dogs and methods of dog training. If you learn to drive a

car, traffic details have a new significance. Thus special interests, as well as mood, determine the details which come into your consciousness and may serve as a basis for selection in your writing:

Another principle of importance is to weed out the impressions which have become commonplace through frequent use. If you must write about the crowd at a baseball game, look at the crowd for yourself instead of recalling what other people have said about such crowds. From your numerous impressions select those which distinguish this particular crowd from general crowds. The team mascot is not any bulldog, but one with a chewed ear. To give the effect of heat, do not enumerate the stock evidences that the sun was blazing down, that men removed their coats and mopped their faces. Suggest the fat man who tucks a handkerchief under his double chin, or the way in which the mascot pants on a sideline. Search for details of your own observation. It is often the slight but significant detail that makes the whole scene stand out sharply in the reader's mind. The *felty beat* of the raindrops in the sand is such a detail, as is the *chink of thin gold* suggesting the twitter of birds. As soon as you begin to look at things for yourself, you will break away from the tendency to report them in the details familiar and dull through frequent use, and to select fresh details from your individual observation.

Donald Peattie in his book, *Singing in the Wilderness*, gives us a biography of Audubon which has the subtle power to recreate the man and his passion for the wilderness. The author does not tell us *about* Audubon, but through his use of detail allows us to

share that vital life. Always the birds dominated Audubon, and in that strange honeymoon trip down the Ohio River Peattie by his selection of details succeeds in conveying an emotional effect which makes us realize their share in his life. Notice how the sound details give both the quiet and the music of his singing wilderness; and how the other sense details give truth to the strange voyage.

In the twelve days of their wedding journey to Louisville, by flatboat down the Ohio River, John and Lucy Audubon saw more water fowl than I suppose I shall ever see. It was spring, and the ducks and the wild geese were fleeing from that soft, flowery southern warmth, passing overhead in a crying, wheeling crowd for the north where, in the fir-ringed lakes, in the marshes and the bogs, they went to mate in the brief, sweet weeks of the arctic summer that is all one day. The Ohio, then, was a world of wings, of water and islands and shores with the forest marching down to the brown strand where giant driftwood lay. Only here and there a farm, smoothing the contours of the land, swept down with generous furrows to the water. With each hundred of miles the farms grew fewer, and only a squatter's cabin here and there betrayed itself by a blue spiral of smoke rising above the forest crown. . . .

When the voyagers were in need of meat, they made fast to the bank, and in a few minutes the men would have teal and turkey and grouse enough for a feast. The women had built the fire and found a spring, and soon the spit was turning, and the odor of woodsmoke and browning fowl mingled with the smell of fern and lichen and moss. Then as twilight closed, and Venus stole forth in the west, the travelers would fall silent, gazing across the majesty of the winding river that caught the last of the afterglow. A boatman's horn wound faintly from among the islands, and near at hand the nighthawks swooped along the shore, pursuing

insects in the last of the light. When darkness came the whip-poor-will calling in the depths of the forest brought eeriness to the moment, and the couples, hand in hand, went back to the ark, where in the prow John took his fiddle under his chin and drew a sweet bow across the responsive strings.

Before daylight, as they drifted asleep down the pale river, began the singing in the wilderness. Voices calling to their mates moving silently in the gloom between the very young leaves of April. First little twitterings and whistlings, a tentative trying of sound in the deep silence. Then the mourning dove, who does not mourn but is content. Then the young cheer of the robins; then the rattle of the flickers and kingfishers, and just before the sun rose from the arms of the trees, the three twirled notes of the wood thrush, so tempered in its gladness. The glittering began; the light pierced in smoky shafts through the forest damp; it danced upon the river ripples, was a blade edge on every leaf, was a diamond sparkle in the dew upon the spider webs. And the great chorus broke forth. The cardinal shouting "Pretty, pretty, pretty!" the concert from many brown thrashers, all the singing sparrows and their many little tunes, drumming from the woodpeckers, fluting of the orioles, a run of happy tanager notes, song and song and song.

So passed the honeymoon journey, the oddest, surely, in the unwritten history of lovers.*

EXERCISE

The following scenes occur often in newspaper descriptions and in students' themes, so that familiar details may rise in your mind as you think about them. Write a few sentences for each scene, in which you give a fresh impression through your own selection of details.

A house, an apartment building, or a schoolhouse on fire.
A crowd at a sale in a department store.

*From D. C. Peattie, *Singing in the Wilderness*. By permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

A blizzard, a severe rain storm, or a spell of heat.

A scene in a park or at a beach on a holiday.

A large gathering of people, such as a political rally, a college meeting, or the arrival of a famous person.

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL

The preceding sections of this chapter on description have offered to you various suggestions as to methods by which you can make descriptive writing vivid, real, and interesting so that the reader may receive and enjoy the impression you wish to convey. There is another factor in good description: the arrangement you give your material, the order you use for your details, the plan by which you present them to the reader. A description should not be a catalog, no matter how good the separate items may be. A list of details, with no reason for their sequence, may fail utterly to give the reader any whole and unified impression of the subject of the description, whether that subject is a cathedral, a person's face, or a ballgame. You need a plan by which you place your reader in a clear relation to the subject being described. If you will consider your own experience in gathering impressions of a building, a piece of natural scenery, or an event, you will understand more clearly the necessity for sound arrangement in your writing of the description. In the first place, you know exactly where you are with relation to the building. You walk along the street toward it, seeing it first from a distance, gaining a general impression of form, color, size. You stand in front of it—say it is a country church—looking up at the wide

doors, the climb of the bell tower above the doors. Then you walk around the building, past the shed where the horses of the church-goers used to be hitched, glancing up at the stained glass windows. Perhaps you find a small cemetery behind the church, with gravestones no longer at right angles to the earth. You circle the building, returning to the front again, and step back across the road to estimate the proportions some unknown builder worked out with careful art. Throughout your inspection, whatever sharp sense impressions you have gathered, you have known always where you stood with relation to the building. A reader is grateful for some indication of your progress, since that permits him to follow the image you are constructing. He likes the first general impression, since that gives him a rough outline into which later details may fall.

You are concerned, in this description of the church, with an object existing in space. There is no time sequence for your details unless you provide one by your journey around the building. You may, however, wish to describe some event, a ball game, a procession, a riot, a panic, which occupies not only a certain space, but also a certain length of time. Here your problem is slightly different.

You have no doubt listened to a skillful radio announcer broadcasting an account of a football game. He is practising the arts of description and narration for a large, scattered audience. Do you remember the care with which he gives the first impression of the scene, the size and shape of the field, the weather with its effects of color, the details of thronging spectators?

He knows that the distant listeners need, first of all, a general impression, such as they would have if they were climbing up the steps, tickets in hand, to find their own seats in the amphitheater. After that opening, as the game begins, he describes the separate plays.

If you are describing an event, a circus parade, a military procession, a polo game, your problem is similar to that of the radio announcer. You need to place your reader in clear relation to the event. When you saw it, you saw it in a definite way. You stood on a street corner; first you heard the band, felt the increased eagerness in the crowds about you, saw banners fluttering in the air. Then the procession came nearer, broke into details of sense impression. Perhaps you watched the circus parade until it disappeared with a trail of small boys scampering along after the policemen had relaxed their control of the observers. Again you knew what your own point of view was. Give the reader a point of view.

If you will turn back to the quotation from William Beebe's *Jungle Peace*, you will discover that he has given his details a clear arrangement. He begins with a general statement, that months of work in the open had sharpened his nostrils. He enlarges upon this statement until you are ready to receive some of the specific jungle odors. He has a vague time scheme for the specific odors, as if he has combined many nights of experience. He has tried to help you appreciate those odors by giving you first the general impression of heightened sensitivity.

The quotation from Marcel Proust's *Swann's Way* has a clear order, although of a different kind. The

author is describing a subjective experience, and to convey this vividly to the reader he follows the experience carefully in its time order. His problem is not difficult, because the experience itself happened as a sequence of moments. He tasted a *madeleine* dipped in tea; he had a sensation of keen pleasure disproportionate to the value of the taste; he attempted to track down the cause for the pleasure. In reporting his experience he fell naturally into the time order. Any other arrangement would only confuse the reader. He has borrowed from the method of narration this plan of chronological arrangement. You will find whenever the element of time enters into your description, when, for example, you are describing an event or an emotional experience, that if you will follow the natural order offered by the passing of time, you will have a simple and satisfactory arrangement of your material. Even here you may need a general, introductory impression, to allow your reader to understand something of the experience he is about to enter in detail.

In planning a descriptive theme, then, remember that you have certain obligations toward your reader. He may need an initial general impression of the valley, the glacier, the steel mill, the river you are about to describe. He needs to know whether you are in an airplane looking down on the valley, or on a walking trip along a road that follows its length, in order that he may share your relation to the scene. If you will keep in mind your own methods of gaining impressions, you will find it easy to orient your reader without the use of formal instructions.

EXERCISE

Select one of the following subjects :

A country fair.

My home town.

A factory, mill, any large manufacturing plant.

City streets.

A summer resort.

The stadium.

Farewell concert of some famous musician.

River boats.

Landing for the first time at a foreign port.

An auction.

A western ranch.

A New England village.

A blizzard in Chicago.

If you wish, substitute from your own experience a subject which interests you for descriptive treatment.

Plan your paper with care, deciding upon the reason for your arrangement of the material, your own relation to it, your inclusion of the reader. It is often helpful to make rough notes of all the sense details the subject stirs in your mind, and then to group them in accordance with your plan. Can you arrange the details in such a way that you give an effect of increasing interest and vividness? Do your first sentences give the reader a general impression of the scene? Does your subject permit a time sequence, or does it require an individual plan of approach on your part? Write a description of five hundred or more words.

STYLE

In good descriptive writing the first step, then, is a recognition of the value of getting your own material,

of the necessity for the selection of details. The next step is the arrangement of this material in an orderly and satisfying manner. The final step consists in the actual communication of this material to other people in such a way that they receive your own vivid impressions. Your success in this final step depends upon your ability to convey your impressions; that is, it depends upon your vocabulary, your sense of phrase, and your command of sentence form.

Fortunately, however dull and meager your vocabulary may be at present, it grows inevitably with your desire to communicate to other people. A limited vocabulary may mean that you have been lazy or indifferent. As soon as you have sharp impressions which you wish to convey, you begin to search for the proper words to carry these impressions. Your vocabulary grows with your need of words.

Refer again to the suggestions in Chapter III regarding the use of the dictionary and the thesaurus. Once you have acquired the habit of using them, your interest in the possibilities of words and their subtleties will develop into an active curiosity as to their scope and their power. Do not forget that in imaginative writing an awareness of living speech is invaluable. Do you listen to people, or are you too busy waiting for the moment when you can begin to talk? Do you realize the distinction between the vocabulary you actually employ, and the vocabulary you understand as you read? Can you not transfer many words from the larger second class to the first? Have you ever tried keeping a list of words you like, words which really seem to belong to you? To run through such a

list of effective words before you begin to write is like taking setting-up exercises.

In imaginative writing there are three defects of style which appear too frequently in unskilled writers, any one of which is ruinous. Perhaps the most common is hackneyed language.

Just as good style comes from the writer's keen realization of what he wishes to say, so stale phrases suggest that the writer has no clear impressions, and drops for that reason into the most familiar word-combinations. These are often the worst he could use. To a good writer a hackneyed phrase comes as a danger signal; it rings a warning bell which says, "Sit up; take a sharper look at your material. Do you see your character? Have you really looked at that field of corn? Have you an image to convey, or have you merely echoed an old phrase?" Good writing does not need the help of worn-out phrases; they are slips in the attention of the author. You will find hackneyed phrases in your own memory, in conversation, in indifferent writing. Sinclair Lewis, in his *Babbitt*, has invented a man who speaks only in trite phrases because he has no thoughts or feelings which are not thoroughly stereotyped. Listen to his references to the "little woman," to the "kiddies." So exactly has he reproduced the conventional person that we know when we hear the expression, "He is a regular Babbitt," just the sort of man the speaker has in mind. Read Dulcy's letters. She heaves a sigh of relief, she calls it a day, her head goes round in circles, she has an idea like a bolt from the blue, sheep are huddled, trees are lacy, sunlight is golden, the attendant is Argus-eyed, and her pine trees

would stand like sentinels. "Tender mercy—eagle eye—clear cut features—young hopeful—wife of his bosom"; you can continue the list almost endlessly. You will find that among the most irritating clichés are many which were originally lines from distinctive writing; too frequent use of them has dulled their edge. You know them: "To be or not to be," "to suffer a sea-change," "trip it lightly as you go." You may remember the woman who objected to Shakespeare because he was too full of quotations. She at least recognized familiar phrases. The clenched fist, the twisted lip, the blanched face, the throbbing heart, are trite expressions of feeling. In general, if phrases drop on the paper without much prior consideration on your part, it is well to scrutinize them.

EXERCISE

Make a list of at least twenty trite phrases, gathered from your own phrase habits, from those of your friends, or from small-town newspapers. Translate ten of them into good phrases.

Flowery or pretentious language is a second common defect in imaginative writing. At times it includes the defect of triteness, but it is often a separate vice. Usually this type of writing has a lack of sincerity behind it. The writer is more concerned with dressing up his idea than with communicating it. He thinks that by decorating his style he may conceal its lack of content. He accumulates elaborate adjectives and adverbs, instead of searching for the specific verb or noun to convey his meaning; he offers strained and artificial figures of speech; he says that a superb colla-

tion was served, when he refers to a church social, and exquisite tendrils of spun gold caressed her alabaster forehead under the sportive wantonness of a spring zephyr, when he means that a breeze ruffled her yellow hair.

A third common defect of style, which should be once more called to the writer's attention, is failure to watch the atmosphere, the connotation of words. Unless one is wary, he will write, "Tears oozed from her beautiful eyes." The word *ooze* is precise, but does it have the right associations? On the contrary, it suggests leaking cans rather than lovely eyes. A foreigner's difficulty with language arises partly from this lack of experience in speech and reading. He knows the dictionary meaning of a word, but he does not know its associations. You know from experience that *dump* is a verb with a certain connotation; so that although a small boy might dump his school books in a corner, an elegant lady would not dump her evening cloak on a chair. You know that *bawling* is different from *crying*, partly in exact meaning, but chiefly in its associations. In your use of thesaurus and dictionary, as you extend the limits of your present vocabulary, you need to seek for words which mean what you wish emotionally as well as literally.

The following composition shows what an intelligent student with a false idea of style can do:

Whoever has not seen the Prospect Park meadow on a winter's eve cannot know how really sorrowful a landscape can appear. The grey mist covering the ground appears like a gigantic mourning veil that Nature has donned in grief for her lost embellishments. The trees, once the proud and

stalwart guardians of the lea, with their bristling armor of foliage, now look emaciated and dejected, shivering in the evening frost. Even the grass, which once afforded the park a beautiful green carpet, has now become a musty and grey covering, which blankets the bier of dead Mother Nature. The skies also, not wishing to commit a sacrilege, have withheld their cerulean brilliancy and have put on their blackish-grey gabardines in condolence for their deceased comrade, Mother Earth. The stillness is as startling as it is awe-inspiring. It seems that the birds, who have been endowed with the most enviable quality of always appearing joyous and vivacious, have found their summer playground entirely too solemn and sorrowful, and, in consequence, have left it for a more inviting harbor, taking with them their flashes of color in addition to their variant melodies and trills. Except for a rare stroller, the scene is devoid of humanity, and we get the impression that Nature is content to grieve and weep in solitude.

Now, what is your honest opinion of this description of Prospect Park meadow? Does it leave you with any abiding impression of the meadow on a winter's evening? Or is it drivel? What is the matter with it?

Almost every sentence contributes to the unreality, the affectation of the style. The writer has added to his vocabulary several unusual words, but he has failed to notice that the word *lea* is wholly English in connotation, and can never call up the image of an American meadow or pasture; that *eve* is labeled in the dictionary "archaic," and should be used only to produce an archaic, old-time atmosphere. Because these uncommon words have been used without regard to context and atmosphere, they give an effect of strained pretension, not of masterly ease. The personification of Mother Nature also seems artificial. The device of personifica-

tion is easy to handle casually and tritely; but then its effect is nil. To handle it effectively one must be overpowered by the illusion that there is a living, feeling person behind the abstraction, and that illusion should be so complete that it shows itself in the fresh treatment of detail. The writer of *Prospect Park Meadow* is so little dominated by his personification that he actually has Nature in the second sentence mourning for the loss of her "embellishments"; in the fourth, lying dead on a bier; in the last, apparently alive again and weeping, whether for her "embellishments" or for her own recent demise we do not know—nor do we care. It is obvious that the writer never had any vision of Prospect Park as a mourning woman; Mother Nature and her griefs are introduced merely in the clumsy attempt to be "literary." The similes and metaphors add to the effect of pretentious unreality. Is the full summer foliage of trees like bristling armor? Grass, to be sure, does afford "a beautiful, green carpet," but the phrase has become a mere rubber-stamp. Finally, there is the preference for stilted, abstract diction over direct concrete diction. The next to the last sentence, beginning "It seems that the birds," is an excellent example of what pompous verbosity can do to blanket the effect of vivid words of color and sound. In that sentence, which should shimmer and sing, we have but two words, *flash* and *trill*, that contribute to the effect: the rest are nearly all superfluous, and all futile. Every device the writer of the description has employed to impress on his readers his mastery of style has only served to betray the pompous pretense.

The fundamental cause of his failure is the fact that he never observed. He had only a vague impression of the landscape and a vague emotion of gloom. These he tried to dress up by every device of language he knew—with ludicrous results. Three sentences emphasizing the cold, the drab coloring, the silence, through freshly observed details and through precise, concrete words, would have been worth ten pages of lamentation over the bier of Mother Nature.

EXERCISE

Contrast the use of words in the description of Prospect Park with the use of words in the earlier illustrations of description in this chapter. Treat the following points. (1) the proportion of abstract to concrete nouns, verbs, and adjectives; (2) the proportion of general to specific nouns, verbs, and adjectives; (3) the preference for adjectives or for nouns and verbs to carry the sense impressions.

You may improve your style not only by avoiding the trite, the pretentious, and the discordant, but also by following certain suggestions. Economize your wording. One telling, precise word is more effective than several words that beat about the bush. Instead of "a bright light" substitute "a glare," "a glow," "a flame." Instead of "walk slowly" substitute "loiter" or "saunter." Instead of "She was a fat woman and walked with an awkward movement, rolling from side to side," say simply, "She waddled."

As always, watch the conclusions of your sentences. When they end in such trite, abstract, and blank phrases as "reached my ears," "lent a weird fascination to the scene," "was a distinct addition to the gaiety

of the occasion," "could be observed," "seemed very attractive to me," something needs to be done. These phrases are worse than useless; they occupy the strategic position, the close, which should be reserved for phrases that count; they obliterate the effect of those phrases. If you are tempted to write, "The goldfish with his goggle eyes pressed against the glass of the aquarium and his tail waving in the green water was still another spectacle to be observed, and I shall not soon forget the impression of delicate charm which he made upon me," realize that you have placed every single forceful word in the first half of your sentence, and that the rest serves only to blot out the original effect. Would it not be better to say, "I shall not soon forget the delicate charm of the goldfish, his goggle eyes pressed against the glass, his tail waving in the green water?"

You will find at times that no matter how extensive your vocabulary has become and no matter how original and vivid your use of words has grown, you will desire to convey some shade of meaning or feeling figuratively rather than directly. The same principles of originality and fitness apply to your figures of speech. A metaphor or a simile must not only contain the element of external likeness; it must be attuned in mood. "The next morning, which happened to be the first of May, came up out of the east like an apple orchard in full bloom." Elinor Wylie, with a poet's sensitiveness, gives you a figure perfectly adjusted in feeling. By way of contrast, "She entered the room like a tug under full steam," serves if you wish to picture a plump, fussy, perhaps breathless little woman,

but not if you wish to suggest a woman of great power. In imaginative writing comparisons are useful only in direct proportion to their emotional truth.

EXERCISES

1. Find in your reading ten similes or metaphors which seem to you good because of their fitness and originality. Copy them out.

2. Work out genuine and, if possible, fresh similes for three of the following: the snores of your roommate; the walk of a tall friend; the look in someone's eyes when you mention an unpleasant subject; the color of a tie or a scarf; an old blackboard; a sophomore hazer; one of the noises produced by a trolley car in motion; a bird's flight or song; a steamshovel; a ten-year-old motor-car; a banana split; mowing with a dull scythe; riding a horse whose gait does not suit you; taking a flat dive; a fine, ripe apple; a silo; dancing the shuffle; the feeling of pleased surprise when you discover a new and apt simile.

The art of description resolves itself into three essential processes: catching vivid, detailed impressions; selecting from the mass of details those which will make for the right general effect; conveying those impressions in coherent, concentrated, apt language, without waste verbiage and without affectation.

EXERCISES

1. Rewrite one of your earlier descriptions in the course, improving the diction and the sentence construction.

2. Write a description of some scene which you have observed especially for the purpose or which is thoroughly familiar in minutest detail—such as a cafeteria, a restaurant, a street corner, a skating rink, a gymnasium class, a dentist's

office, a picnic party, a newspaper office, a cider mill, a church service, a cramming session, a spread, a theatre, a hotel foyer, a street car, baseball practice, a soda fountain.

Test it to see whether it shows observation of unusual details, selection which produces a definite effect, proper arrangement, accurate and apt wording.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHARACTER SKETCH

RELATION OF THE CHARACTER SKETCH TO DESCRIPTION

THERE are many people in your daily life whom you know by sight: fellow students in classes, clerks in stores, a policeman on a certain corner, members of a family living in your block, a famous violinist, or motion picture actor. You recognize them as persons you have seen before; with some of them you may have a slight acquaintance. You do not know these people well: you would find it hard to decide which of them would be cool-headed in an emergency, which you could trust with money, which would be kind or wise if you were in trouble. You could, however, describe all of them, giving some details of their appearance.

There are, on the other hand, people whom you know very well. You know not only how they look, what kind of clothes they wear, how they walk, but what they think about, what they like to do; and far more intimate details, such as what angers them, what pleases them, whether they are tricky or reliable, ambitious or lazy, selfish or fair in their treatment of friends. You could do much more than describe the appearance

of one of these persons; you could explain him. If you start to answer the question, "What kind of boy is Bill, anyway?" you may begin with some description. "Oh, he's tall, with light hair and a big mouth"; but you continue with details drawn from acquaintance with Bill: "He's easy-going and good-natured. Always broke, because he'll lend you his last cent, and usually late, if you make a date with him, because he stopped to rescue a lost dog." You do not wish to give a picture of Bill; you wish to make this inquirer feel as if he knew Bill and understood him.

In writing, you may describe a character so that the reader has an impression of his appearance. You may even suggest by certain details that the character seems sly or bold or well-bred. But your description is incomplete so far as an interpretation of the character is concerned. It leaves the reader in a position to guess a little about the character, just as you may do about these people whom you know by sight. In a character sketch you give the reader an intimate knowledge of the character, so that he understands this person about whom he reads, just as he understands people whom he knows well. A good character sketch may be as exciting as a new friend.

THE PROBLEM OF THE CHARACTER SKETCH

To present a character to a reader so that he believes in him, accepts him as a human being, is not an easy matter. You are offering in your sketch a substitute for months or years of personal encounter. You come to know people gradually, as you work and play with

them. In a character sketch you introduce the reader to a stranger, and then in a few pages you try to make that stranger a familiar acquaintance. In the following sections of this chapter we shall see what are the best tools for such a task.

Try to describe a friend to your roommate so that when the door opens and your friend stands there, your roommate will immediately recognize him. If the friend has some unusual physical traits, such as flaming red hair and two conspicuous gold crowns, the task will be easier. But if you know this friend well, however ordinary his appearance, you may identify him beyond possibility of mistake. You may give enough characteristic actions of his so that when your roommate meets him he will recognize instantly that here is the fellow you were talking about. He may never do exactly the things you have related of him, but the things he does do will fit the kind of person you have been discussing. Your roommate will say, "That is just like the Sam I was told about." You have conveyed an impression of the real Sam.

In much the same way you go about creating the person in your character sketch. Your external description of him reveals something, but not all. You must go farther than details of his appearance. There are many ways in which a person shows what kind of personality he has, what are his character traits. A writer, whether he is inventing a fictitious character, or explaining a real person, simply uses these methods by which people reveal themselves.

APPEARANCE

Just how much connection do you think exists between the appearance of a person and his personality or character? When you meet someone casually, you have an impression that goes beyond a mere registering of color of eyes or cut of coat. You think: he looks like an artist, or a farmer, or even a bully. The accuracy of your judgment depends somewhat upon your experience with people and your interest in the evidences of character. But you do size up this new person. You look him over, and if he has any striking characteristics of build, bearing, feature, you note those. Among the people you know slightly, you recognize one by his walk, another by the prominent stare of his eyes, another by her fluttering veils. You may pride yourself on being able to read character from the face, assuming that certain peculiarities of feature or expression always denote certain traits. Does a receding chin indicate stupidity, and a thin, sharp nose a suspicious nature? In spite of popular belief, this method of appraising character is not infallible. An eminent psychologist told me that of a group of immigrants at Ellis Island, the woman he picked from her appearance as the most promising candidate for citizenship, turned out to be the only moron in the group. One does well not to rely completely upon appearance as a key to character. But just as in life the appearance of a person assists in creating the impression of his character, so in the character sketch details of appearance will help to establish the impression you wish to give. You have an advantage as writer, in that you

can select only those details which possess some relation to the personality you are setting down. Furthermore, just as in life your knowledge of a friend must include your knowledge of how he looks, so in a character sketch a reader wishes to have an image suggested of the person he is meeting.

Willa Cather, in her character story "Paul's Case," makes use of the boy's appearance:

Paul entered the faculty room suave and smiling. His clothes were a trifle out-grown, and the tan velvet on the collar of his open overcoat was frayed and worn, but for all that there was something of the dandy about him, and he wore an opal pin in his neatly knotted black four-in-hand, and a red carnation in his buttonhole.

Paul was tall for his age and very thin, with high, cramped shoulders and a narrow chest. His eyes were remarkable for a certain hysterical brilliancy, and he continually used them in a conscious, theatrical sort of way, peculiarly offensive in a boy. The pupils were abnormally large, as though he were addicted to belladonna, but there was a glassy glitter about them which that drug does not produce.*

Later, you have his set smile, and the nervous trembling of his fingers; and later, the drawing master's observation of the boy's face in sleep:

His master noted with amazement what a white, blue-veined face it was; drawn and wrinkled like an old man's about the eyes, the lips twitching even in his sleep.

These details suggest a character very different from the other high-school boys: self-conscious, nervous, unhappy, on the defensive against his small world.

* From Willa Cather, *Youth and the Bright Medusa*. Alfred Knopf.

In *My Antonia*, Willa Cather gives you this picture of the grandmother:

She was a spare, tall woman, a little stooped, and she was apt to carry her head thrust forward in an attitude of attention, as if she were looking at something, or listening to something, far away. As I grew older, I came to believe that it was only because she was so often thinking of things that were far away. She was quick-footed and energetic in all her movements.*

In *The Little French Girl*, Anne Douglas Sedgwick draws the *grandmère* thus:

As for Grandmère, Giles, in spite of Alix's intimations, was hardly prepared for such a fearsome old lady. Very fearsome he found her, peering shrewdly up at him through the fringes of her parasol, with the beady eye of an old raven under a dark-blue beetling eyebrow. She was powdered and dyed, and an erection of black lace ornamented her ample indigo wig and fell in lappets on either side of her long Semitic cheeks.†

These two illustrations, in giving the appearance of the characters, suggest beyond doubt the race from which each has sprung, and the environment in which each has lived. You have the simplicity and directness of character of the grandmother in *My Antonia*, and the complexity and artificiality of *Grandmère*.

Often a sharper effect of the quality of the appearance comes when the writer uses suggestion instead of a catalog of details, thus allowing the reader to create the picture in part from his own imagination.

* From Willa Cather, *My Antonia*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

† From Anne Douglas Sedgwick, *The Little French Girl*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Notice this description of Alix, in *The Little French Girl*:

When she was left alone, she stood and looked at herself. Yes; it was true. Beautiful that little head; beautiful the long, splendid throat, the breast and arms so white. In the tilted mirror she looked like a naiad hovering within the thin falling lines of a fountain. Tiny crystal drops fell along her arms and flowed from breast to hem. She moved, and liquid lines of crystal moved with her. Her shoes were of silver and a fillet of twisted silver and crystal bound her dark hair.

In the following brief passage the author again suggests the loveliness of youth without giving particulars of nose, eyes, or ears:

She sat opposite him, all silvery in the soft candle-light, her young, downcast face set in its narrow frame of hair, and he knew that grief and fear were in her heart.

EXERCISES

1. Try to set off in a few sentences of description five people whom you know well: make the description suggest the chief qualities of each person. Do not mention the quality; make your selection of details from the appearance convey to the reader your impression.

2. Select five persons whom you have met once or twice, or whom you pass occasionally on the street, or see in your classrooms. Try to suggest in five brief descriptions the impression of personality each gives you.

SPEECH

Suppose, then, we accept the fact that the physical appearance of a person, his features, bearing, clothes, and mannerisms, may give an impression which will

have to be modified later. What is your next step in the process by which you come to know a person? You wish to hear him speak. The contradiction between a person's appearance and his speech is sometimes startling. When you pass a well-dressed woman on the street and hear her burst into a harsh, ungrammatical tirade, you change your first impression of her.

More than one quality enters into your evaluation of the speech of a person. The voice makes an immediate impression and becomes at once associated with its owner. You can identify your mother's voice without hesitation if she speaks to you outside the door, whether you can see her or not. Yet try to describe that voice so that another person, unfamiliar with it, would recognize it. You have no easy task. It may be high or low pitched, harsh or sweet in tone, thin or rich in quality, guttural or clear; but beyond all these characteristics it has a personal note which makes it unmistakable to you who know it, and a matter of doubt to the one who does not know it.

Willa Cather finishes her picture of the grandmother with a recognition of the importance of her voice:

Her voice was high and rather shrill, and she often spoke with an anxious inflection, for she was exceedingly desirous that everything should go with due order and decorum. Her laugh, too, was high, and perhaps a little strident, but there was a lively intelligence in it.*

Anne Douglas Sedgwick uses the same technique in her description of *Grandmère*:

* From Willa Cather, *My Antonia*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Her smile was histrionic and her voice hoarse as if with years of use for public purposes. Now and then she emitted a loud gong-like laugh, and Giles could somehow imagine her, so full of vitality did she still seem, standing in classic draperies on a vast stage and bellowing forth passages from Victor Hugo.*

The articulation of a person helps you in your judgment of him. Whether he speaks his words with clear precision or slurs them into slovenly indistinctness is a determining factor. You get an impression from the poverty or richness of his vocabulary, from the kind of idiom he uses. Yet if that poverty of vocabulary is combined with a certain peculiarity of idiom and a raccoon coat, you will know that the speech is a matter of convention rather than necessity and your judgment will not be the same as if you were listening to the equally limited vocabulary of the newsboy. The employer who demands a personal interview before he hires an applicant is sound in his method of characterization. In a personal interview he not only looks his prospective employee over, but he listens to him speak. He finds that speech illuminating in much the same way as you do when you are going through the process of knowing a person. In a character sketch, therefore, dialog is an important element. It is, moreover, a part which is sure to be read.

Clarence Day's book, *Life with Father*, is a series of character sketches in which he presents his father in action in the home. At the end of the book we feel as if we knew Father, perhaps not with the intimacy of his family, but with a pretty thorough understand-

* From Anne Douglas Sedgwick, *The Little French Girl*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

ing. Part of the reality of Father comes from the way in which his speech reveals his personality. When he hires a cook,* he rushes to the agency and has a brief but effective conversation with the manager. None of his words is wasted but he gets his cook. Read his brief speeches to the manager, to Margaret, and to his wife later, and see how they reveal the self-confident, arrogant, amusing character of the man.

What your character says and how he says it, then, are of utmost importance. The speech must possess human naturalness, and furthermore, must sound like the talk of the character you have chosen to set down. You will discover, as you listen to speech, that there are certain characteristics of classes or types of people more apparent than individual differences.

College freshmen, department store cash girls, vaudeville actors, professional men, may have common habits of speech in their separate groups. Speech reveals so quickly the degree of cultivation and the interests of the speaker that there are general characteristics for groups of people. The characteristics may be those of phrase, of slang, of accent, and to some extent, of sentence form. For this reason it is important, as for many other reasons, that you should handle types of people with whom you are familiar. If you know the general group in which your character belongs, then you will have less difficulty in making his conversation natural. Too often an amateur writer allows his characters to talk in his own best literary style. Listen carefully to conversations about you to determine for yourself the tendency in all talk toward informality.

* See p. 462.

It is easy to create a pedantic or a pretentious character by making his speech too correct and formal. If you will try to capture the ring of real speech, and if you will use for material types of people whom you know, you will have a basis for success when you employ dialog as one method of revealing character.

Katherine Mansfield's story, "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," shows the effect upon Josephine and Constantia of the years of domination by their father. The following brief dialog is a succinct illustration of their prevailing characteristic, their inability to make decisions:

They were interrupted by Kate bursting through the door in her usual fashion, as though she had discovered some secret panel in the wall.

"Fried or boiled?" asked the bold voice.

Fried or boiled? Josephine and Constantia were quite bewildered for the moment. They could hardly take it in.

"Fried or boiled what, Kate?" asked Josephine, trying to begin to concentrate.

Kate gave a loud sniff. "Fish."

"Well, why didn't you say so immediately?" Josephine reproached her gently. "How could you expect us to understand, Kate? There are a great many things in this world, you know, which are fried or boiled." And after such a display of courage she said quite brightly to Constantia, "Which do you prefer, Con?"

"I think it might be nice to have it fried," said Constantia. "On the other hand, of course boiled fish is very nice. I think I prefer both equally well. . . . Unless you . . . In that case . . ."

"I shall fry it," said Kate, and she bounced back, leaving their door open and slamming the door of her kitchen.*

* From Katherine Mansfield, *The Garden Party*. Alfred Knopf.

GESTURE

Your character may have mannerisms that accompany his speech. Almost nobody talks in an absolutely passive manner, and usually the way in which he uses his hands, or lounges against the door, or walks nervously about the room, characterizes him as much as his words.

Kate, in her conversation with the Colonel's daughters, shows clearly enough her contempt for the vacillation of the two women, and her own ability to decide trivial matters. Her slammed door is eloquent. So, too, is Jo's gesture, in the dialog from Edna Ferber's *The Gay Old Dog*, when he passes a futile hand over the top of his head. He should be incensed at his sisters' treatment of his gifts, but instead of anger, he feels only bewilderment at his failure to please the girls.

EXERCISES

1. Write a dialog between two people in which one is being cross-questioned about a matter which he wishes to conceal. Make his attitude and gestures convey his desire for concealment.

2. Write a dialog between a traffic officer and a driver in which gestures as well as conversation reveal the character traits of each speaker.

MENTAL ANALYSIS

Often a character does not speak, but you, as his author, know perfectly well what is going on in his mind. You, therefore, have a perfect right to analyze

his emotions and thoughts. Care should be taken, however, not to overdo this or the preceding method. When a gesture or mannerism is emphasized too much it resolves itself into a caricature. We have all seen stage characters who always announce themselves by whistling off tune, or by using some peculiar phrase, and usually those characters stand for little else besides the tune or the phrase. We have all read character sketches in which the subject thinks in a vacuum until the reader can bear no more. Both methods are good, however, if used in moderation.

ACTION

Appearance, then, suggests character, but is not final. Speech carries the impression still further. But you are not sure of the character of your person until you have watched his behavior. He may tell you that he is honest, but you see him cheat the conductor out of a nickel. He may uphold kindness to animals, but he kicks a stray dog. He may say that he is hard as nails, but you happen to know how much time and energy he spent trying to get a job for a needy person. When you have seen him at his work, at his play, in action in his own environment, then you feel that you have material for sound characterization. In your own experience as well as in fiction, you recognize that conduct reveals the core of a personality.

If, then, in your character sketch, you use small incidents which show the way your character behaves toward other people or things about him, you will strengthen the impression you have attempted to create

by details of appearance and speech. Instead of telling about the characteristic, or suggesting it in appearance and dialog, you dramatize it, or put it into the form of an incident. Make the statement that Evelyn, a gifted girl, does not like to study. Your reader has no clear impression of Evelyn's tendency to fritter away her time. Develop this statement into an incident based on her ingenuity in avoiding the issue of study whereby she spends the whole morning washing the class mascot dog in order to earn twenty cents to telephone her mother about her low marks at midterm, and you have proved her characteristic by the dramatic incident form. If you realize that an incident, however simple, may be infinitely more powerful than any statement you can make *about* the character trait, you are a long way toward the process of vivid characterization.

Robert P. Tristram Coffin through his deep love for the Maine coast presents it and its people with such penetrating understanding that any reader who brings to his book sincerity and love of beauty can partake of his knowledge and appreciation. Among the people he characterizes in *Lost Paradise* is the old seaman, Cap'n Dan. First he tells you how the man looks; then deeper, what he is like inside; then through his achievements, or what he is like in action, the sort of person he really was.

Cap'n Dan was cut out for the sea. He showed it in the way his knees bent as he walked. He showed it in the oaths he used. He thought with his hands and the feel of his skin. There was a lot of him turned up for feet. He knew the bottom of every bay as though he could see it. Weather went right into him deep, and he could see it coming round cor-

ners. His bones were as good as barometers. He could smell mackerel from six miles inland. He would up anchor under a sky as clear as a bell, and scoot for the inner islands, though the cod were thicker than fiddlers in Tophet and eating the hooks off his lines. And by the time he was inside the arms of the first of the bays, the fog would be so thick you could cut it with a knife. He could thread his way through every one of the channels which wound enough to give a snake a backache, and get in a good doze at the same time. He could take a short cut over reefs and scrape only the barnacles from his keel. He was as good as going to college if you wanted to learn how to catch fish.*

If you have ever tried to sail over a reef, you know the fine discrimination necessary to scrape barnacles off the keel without going aground the rocks. If a man had such a knowledge of the sea in all his senses that he could smell mackerel six miles inland, and sense a fog before it was in any degree visible, he was, as Coffin says, cut out for the sea. Each achievement of his helps to prove this truth about his character.

When Coffin characterizes his mother, again he presents her in action and leaves us to decide the sort of person she was. His selection of the incidents which bring out her tenderness and her strength shows her quality, and displays his skill in making us understand it:

Peter's mother was a small woman. She came only to some of her sons' shoulders. But you'd never think it to see her going. She was as strong as blue steel. In her time, she had done about everything from hold a plough to teach a lazy son his A.B.C.'s. She must have baked square rods of johnnycake and cut out small trousers enough to cover

* From R. P. T. Coffin, *Lost Paradise*. By permission of the Macmillan Co.

a pasture. She had built walls of loaves and pies to keep the cold out of her family. The steps she had taken would put a featherstitch around the farm ten times. She had been a doctor and fought croups and cramps and aches and pains and more desperate illnesses alone through lonely nights, far from help. She had learned to sleep with her mind still on her children. Sleep with one eye at a time, with one hand. All her children kicked off the covers at night, they were so full of the electricity of their father. But she kept them all covered through all the months of Winter, Spring, and Fall. In Summer, she just let them lie. She could go in and cover a child in her sleep.*

This paragraph makes us know that the mother had the characteristics of competence, alertness, intelligence, quick reaction, strength of body and spirit, and wisdom of management. If the writer had told us these facts instead of giving us the action which proved them, our realization of the mother would have been dim, even if at the best we had accepted the author's word that she was that sort of person. And of course there is no reason why we should accept anybody's word without proof. Now we are convinced of the character of Peter's mother.

Clarence Day in *Life with Father* † tells how Father sews on the button. Here we see the man in action. He assembles his tools, tries to thread his needle, loses it, loses the spool, and finally sticks his finger. Nowhere are we told of his impatience, his stubbornness, his hot temper, but it would be a dull reader who could not gather those characteristics. Mother, the appalled spectator, is equally clear as she watches the bout. The

*From R. P. T. Coffin, *Lost Paradise*. By permission of the Macmillan Co.

† See p. 464.

final sentences of dialog in which he blames her put the finishing touch to a scene in which the high humor does not for a moment cloud the sharp characterization of Father. Note how the simplicity of diction heightens the humor of the incident.

Slight bits of action often throw light on personality. In *The Little French Girl*, when the young people are preparing for Christmas, Alix ties her presents carefully with holiday ribbons, explaining that she likes green because it seems to go with Christmas and fir trees and snow; the two young English girls whom she is visiting wrap their gifts with brown paper and tie them with old knotted string, a lack of fastidiousness which was characteristic of them. In *My Antonia*, Willa Cather makes use of a small incident in which Jim kills a rattlesnake to dramatize Antonia's tenderness and care of others. Her only feelings are reassurance for the small boy and pride in his accomplishment.

In life you believe that what a person does indicates what that person is. Make use of this principle of the revealing power of action as you work on character sketches.

EXERCISES

Devise a brief incident which would persuade you that a person was cowardly, hypocritical, honest, egoistic, stupid, unscrupulous, slow to anger, loyal.

THE VALUE OF SIMPLIFICATION

You must know your person before you can write about him. But if you try to tell all that you know

about him, your reader may be lost in the complexities of a human being. You have not a character sketch which by its penetrating quality succeeds in giving the very essence of the man. You have a catalogued list of details about him. These characteristics as in real life may contradict each other, and their number and diversity will only serve to confuse and bore your reader. Your business is to simplify the character so that you leave your reader a single dominant feeling about him.

Take Katherine Mansfield's *The Young Girl*. The reader is left with the impression that the girl is in the adolescent stage of dramatizing herself into a sophisticated woman. Through a series of incidents which embody different poses she reveals herself in a touching way. We understand her and give her the kind of tolerant, amused sympathy which Katherine Mansfield intends us to feel. Yet this girl must have many other characteristics. She may have liked to sew, or to swim, or to ride horseback. She may have been lazy, unkind, irresponsible, or affectionate. Those characteristics had little bearing on the effect which the author was trying to produce. She therefore paid no attention to them except as they may have modified those which she chose to develop.

Galsworthy's character sketch called *Quality* * is another good illustration of the way the character is simplified in order to leave a single effect on the reader. At the end of this revealing sketch the reader is left with one dominant feeling, a poignant realization of the devotion of the old bootmaker to quality in his

* See Loomis, *Models for Writing Prose*, page 445.

chosen work. Galsworthy conveys this conviction of the old man that his work is an art through the series of visits to the little boot shop. The visits are rare because the boots are too good to wear out; old Gessler's remarks are scanty and succinct. Yet in the few pages of the sketch Galsworthy reveals to us the tragedy that an artist endures from failure. Without doubt the old man had many other characteristics besides devotion to his work, but Galsworthy focuses on the development of the trait which he wishes to use to move his reader's emotion. And he achieves that unified emotional effect which makes for a successful character sketch.

The effect of cataloging every detail of character about a person, then, is to spread the interest of your reader so thin that you leave him with only a vague notion of the person. Selection of details is as important a part of your preparation for your sketch as is the gathering of them. Since your aim is not analysis, but a unified impression of the character, this aim should govern the material you include in the sketch.

EFFECT OF GENERALITIES

You can never achieve a sharp image in the mind of your reader by making general statements about your character. "Rose was a pretty, sweet girl, who attracted attention wherever she went." Does this statement give you any visual image of the appearance of Rose? In the question of beauty, what is one man's meat is another man's poison. If Rose is to appear sharply before us, we must have some striking detail about her, and if we are to believe that she attracts at-

tention by her beauty we must be allowed to note her effect on others. "Reuben was a tall, strong man, who hesitated before no danger." Does Reuben interest you as a person? Do you respond to his powerful personality and his high courage? The writer gives you in each case his own statement about the character plus a few stock details of appearance. These generalities cause nothing whatever to happen in your mind.

You can draw upon details of appearance, of speech, of mannerisms, and finally, of conduct. Give a character sketch of Rose at her first party when neither she nor anybody else had realized what her effect would be on the other people. Put her in action under the discovery of her own power. Have a purpose in mind and make Rose play up to it. Turn out a sketch of the dawning upon her of the powers of her own beauty which will have the subtlety and truth of Katherine Mansfield's *The Young Girl*. Then your reader will believe that Rose was a pretty girl. Choose an incident for Reuben in which he faces danger with the intrepidity you have stated he possesses. The concrete and the dramatic will give your character the reality you wish, whereas generalizations will do little but bore the reader.

EXERCISES

Translate into paragraphs of good characterization the following general statements:

He was a willful child, who caused trouble.

He was a born leader.

She was a poor housekeeper, but her other qualities made her family overlook her carelessness.

She had a magnetic personality.

EQUIPMENT OF THE WRITER

Since the purpose of a character sketch is to present a person with such clarity and understanding that the reader can accept him, the writer must possess a clear understanding of his character. A writer's understanding may be penetrating enough to identify traits in the youth of a character which are so fundamental that they are bound to persist throughout his life. Such characteristics Donald Peattie shows us in his portrait of the boy Audubon,* who uses all of his persuasive charm on his father to make him understand the terrific urge which drives him.

In Katherine Mansfield's *The Young Girl*, you have another wise interpretation of a young person. Katherine Mansfield knew perfectly well that all the indications of boredom and scorn of her surroundings which were part of the pose of her young girl meant that she was only trying to conceal her overwhelming sense of inferiority at being so hopelessly young. She did not, therefore, make us feel irritated at the girl's rudeness as we might have felt in real life. She interpreted the adolescent desires with such subtlety that she leaves us with a feeling of sympathetic understanding. Yet never once has she made a sentimental bid for our sympathy. Understanding herself how things were with this child, she has interpreted, with a skill which does not have to explain, the confused reach of youth toward the externals of adult life.

Tolerance and understanding are almost a necessary part of the equipment of the writer of a good character

* See p. 466.

sketch. He must be able to go below the surface of action to the motive which stimulated it. What lies behind the efforts of the person who is always trying to be funny? He has probably found that it is the one way by which he can be sure of attracting the attention of people, and the instinct for approval, which is part of everyone's equipment, drives him on. How about the person who blusters and swaggers and boasts? He is usually suffering rather bitterly from an inner recognition of his own weakness. If you understand that suffering, your character sketch will convey a new understanding of human nature to your reader. Suppose you wish to do a character sketch of an extremely sensitive person. When you realize that behind that sensitiveness exists the complete egoist, you are able to present him with devastating clarity. Watch people, including yourself, to discover what makes them act as they do. What are the indications of fear, of jealousy, of pride? Why does a person refuse to take the blame for failure upon himself, but seek to project it upon others, or on hard times. He rationalizes his failure in order to make the motive sound better to his social conscience.

To understand personality, or the quality which makes one person different from another, we need insight. And insight carried over into writing gives penetration. Do you try to find out why people do things, or are you likely to jump at a first conclusion and take it as final? When you get at the mental state which is the driving force behind an action, you begin to have a sympathetic eye for the characters you watch.

The greatest obstacle to insight is the tendency, com-

mon to all of us, to act from one motive and to try to make ourselves and others believe that we act from another. Insight in the form of ability to see through one's rationalization is essential to the writer who must deal with human problems. Are you, as a matter of fact, the kind of person who, in the well-phrased term, is "on to himself"? Do you always know what motives drive you into certain actions? One fairly fruitful subject of study for the writer is himself. Much that is obscure in other people becomes clear with the acceptance of like weakness or strength in oneself.

The writer in giving a picture of his character has a perfect right to invent incidents. He need not feel bound by what he knows about a person. The material for a character sketch is likely to be more successful if it exists partly in the imagination and partly in real life. If the character is drawn too closely from life, the writer may find his very richness of knowledge a drawback. In struggling for exactness in his portrait he is overwhelmed by the complexity of his subject and the result is confusion. If, on the contrary, his character is drawn entirely from the imagination, he encounters the danger of a commonplace and second-hand result, the distinguishing characteristic of which is lack of truth. Let life furnish the basis of material to be worked over by the creative force of the imagination.

EXERCISES

1. Following is a list of types of person, to which you will probably find it possible to add from your own observation. Think up incidents important enough to prove

beyond doubt that the person is the sort of character which you have in mind.

Spendthrift. Miser. Flirt. Coward. Person who believes in safety first. Small egoist. Irresponsible girl or boy. Scientist. Dreamer. Prig. Prude. Mechanical genius. Kindly person. Oversensitive person. Bluffer. Hypocrite. "Go-getter." War veteran. Elocutionist. Girl who has been to Europe. Drummer.

2. Try to sketch a character, giving a series of small episodes: either a typical day of a person, or incidents over a period of time emphasizing one trait. In its highest form such a sketch becomes a short story. A good illustration of such a sketch where the incidents provided have the necessary ascending drama is Katherine Mansfield's story, *Mr. Reginald Peacock's Day*, in Loomis, *Models for Writing Prose*, page 469.

MODEL CHARACTER SKETCHES

FATHER HIRES A COOK *

by Clarence Day

One late afternoon when Father came up from downtown, he found his home much upset. Our cook had walked out and left us. I was a child of four, George was two, and there was a new baby besides. Mother was ill. She hadn't been able to leave us to go to an agency. And as she was no hand at cooking herself, the outlook for dinner was poor.

This state of affairs was unprecedented in all Father's experience. In his father's home, they never changed their servants suddenly; they seldom changed them at all; and as his mother was a past mistress of cooking, he had always been doubly protected. Since his marriage, he had had to live a much bumpier life. But this was the worst yet.

He asked Mother, who was lying in bed, what she was

* From Clarence Day, *Life with Father*. Alfred Knopf.

going to do about it. There were no telephones then, and she couldn't do anything at all, at the moment; but she said she would try to go to an agency in the morning and see what she could find. "In the morning? Good God!" Father said. "Where is the place, anyhow?" And he clapped on his hat and strode out again, over toward Sixth Avenue.

As I heard the story years afterward, it was late when he got there, and he bounded up the front stoop two or three steps at a time, and went quickly into the little office, where the gaslights were burning. He had never been in such a place before, and to his surprise it was empty, except for a severe-looking woman who sat at a desk at one side. "Where do you keep 'em?" he urgently demanded, his mind on the question of dinner.

She looked at him, got out her pen, and opened a large book deliberately. "I will take your name and address," she informed him, "and then, if you please, you may give me the details as to what kind of person you require and when you would wish her to call."

But Father had no time, he told her, for any damned fol-de-rol. "Where do you keep 'em?" he said again. She was standing in the way of his dinner. I can imagine how his face must have reddened and how his eyes must have blazed at her. "I am asking you where you keep them!" he roared.

"Why, the girls are in there," the lady explained, to calm him, "but clients are not allowed in that room. If you will tell me the kind of position you wish me to fill for you, I will have one come out."

Before she'd half finished, Father had thrown open the door and gone in. There sat a crowd of the girls, young and old, sickly and brawny, of all shapes and sizes; some ugly, some pretty and trim and stylish, some awkward; nurses, ladies' maids, waitresses, washerwomen, and cooks.

The manager was by now at Father's elbow, trying to make him get out, and insisting that he tell her the position he wished her to fill. But Father was swiftly glancing around at the crowd, and he paid no attention. He noticed a little woman in the corner, with honest gray eyes, who sat there,

shrewd-looking and quiet. He pointed his cane over at her and said, "I'll take that one."

The manager was flustered, but still she kept trying to enforce her authority. She protested she didn't yet know the position. . . .

"Cook," Father said, "cook."

"But Margaret doesn't wish to be a cook, she wants—"

"You can cook, can't you?" Father demanded.

Margaret's plain little face was still pink with excitement and pleasure at being chosen above all that roomful by such a masterful gentleman. Father had probably smiled at her, too, for they liked each other at once. Well, she said, she had cooked for one family.

"Of course she can cook," Father said.

The manager didn't like this at all. The discipline of the office was spoiled. "If you are going to take her anyhow," she said acidly, "what day would you wish her to come, and will you please give me your name?"

"Yes, yes," Father said, without giving it. "Come on Margaret." And he planked down the fee and walked out.

Margaret followed him through the door and trotted over to our home at his heels. He sent her down to the kitchen immediately, while he went upstairs to dress.

"I don't know why you make such a fuss about engaging new servants. It's simple enough," he said comfortably to Mother that evening, after Margaret's first dinner.

It was the first of a long series, for she stayed with us twenty-six years.

FATHER SEWS ON A BUTTON *

by Clarence Day

Buttons were Father's worst trial, however, from his point of view. Ripped shirts and socks with holes in them could still be worn, but drawers with their buttons off

* From Clarence Day, *Life with Father*. Alfred Knopf.

couldn't. The speed with which he dressed seemed to discourage his buttons and make them desert Father's service. Furthermore, they always gave out suddenly and at the wrong moment.

He wanted help and he wanted it promptly at such times, of course. He would appear at Mother's door with a waistcoat in one hand and a disloyal button in the other, demanding that it be sewn on at once. If she said she couldn't just then, Father would get as indignant as though he had been drowning and a life-guard had informed him he would save him to-morrow.

When his indignation mounted high enough to sweep aside his good judgment, he would say in a stern voice, "Very well, I'll sew it on myself," and demand a needle and thread. Mother knew only too well what it meant. She would beg him to leave his waistcoat in her work basket and let her do it next day. Father was inflexible. Moreover, his decision would be strengthened if he happened to glance at her basket and see how many of his socks were dismally waiting there in that crowded exile.

"I've been looking for those blue polka-dotted socks for a month," he said angrily one night before dinner. "Not a thing is done for a man in this house. I even have to sew on my own buttons. Where is your needle and thread?"

Mother reluctantly gave these implements to him. He marched off, sat on the edge of his sofa in the middle of his bedroom, and got ready to work. The gaslight was better by his bureau, but he couldn't sit on a chair when he sewed. It had no extra room on it. He laid his scissors, the spool of thread, and his waistcoat down on the sofa beside him, wet his fingers, held the needle high up and well out in front, and began poking the thread at the eye.

Like every commander, Father expected instant obedience, and he wished to deal with trained troops. The contrariness of the needle and the limp obstinacy of the thread made him swear. He stuck the needle in the sofa while he wet his fingers and stiffened the thread again. When he came to take

up his needle, it had disappeared. He felt around everywhere for it. He got up, holding fast to his thread, and turned around, facing the sofa to see where it was hiding. This jerked the spool off onto the floor, where it rolled away and unwound.

The husbands of two of Mother's friends had had fits of apoplexy and died. It frightened her horribly when this seemed about to happen to Father. At the sound of his roars, she rushed in. There he was on the floor, as she had feared. He was trying to get his head under the sofa and he was yelling at something, and his face was such a dark red and his eyes so bloodshot that Mother was terrified. Pleading with him to stop only made him more apoplectic. He said he'd be damned if he'd stop. He stood up presently, tousled but triumphant, the spool in his hand. Mother ran to get a new needle. She threaded it for him and he at last started sewing.

Father sewed on the button in a violent manner, with vicious haulings and jabs. Mother said she couldn't bear to see him—but she couldn't bear to leave the room, either. She stood watching him, hypnotized and appalled, itching to sew it herself, and they talked at each other with vehemence. Then the inevitable accident happened: the needle came forcibly up through the waistcoat, it struck on the button, Father pushed at it harder, and it burst through the hole and stuck Father's finger.

He sprang up with a howl. To be impaled in this way was not only exasperating, it was an affront. He turned to me, as he strode about on the rug, holding onto his finger, and said wrathfully, "It was your mother."

"Why, Clare!" Mother cried.

"Talking every minute," Father shouted at her, "and distracting a man! How the devil can I sew on a button with this gibbering and buzz in my ears? Now see what you made me do!" he added suddenly. "Blood on my good waistcoat! Here! Take the damned thing. Give me a handkerchief to tie up my finger with. Where's the witch-hazel?"

THE BOY AUDUBON *

by Donald Culross Peattie

Concerning her little stepdaughter she was fully satisfied, and so she gave her little thought. But the two Jeans had entered her life too disturbingly ever to be merely family; they were romance to her, intimate strangers in whom she had a singing pride. They were like as two coins, she thought, struck only in different years—the same warm flashing eyes, the same fine head, one in a white peruke, the other with shining light brown locks to the shoulders. The same quick flare of temper, and the same rainbow smile after the storm. With her each could do what he liked, but in one another each had met his match. The minuet pirouetted to an end, and the Captain clapped his long hands. There was a little rustle of success about Rosa.

"Well, now, Jean Jacques," said the Captain, "what have you to show us?"

"Come and see," said Jean Jacques, rising. And he held open the door for his father.

Rosa and her stepmother accompanied him pridefully upstairs, after Jean Jacques. The boy opened the door of his bedroom cluttered like a museum. A parrot rasped in its cage, "*Rien pour pauvre Mignonne?*" And a small marmoset ceased from turning over three kestrel's eggs in a box and leaped guiltily to the top of the mirror.

"Here, see this, *mon père*," said Jean Jacques. "I finished stuffing it only to-day. A corn-crake."

The Captain picked it up in appraising fingers, on its little stand of dried peat. Sod and bird, the specimen seemed to weigh no heavier than a copper. It was, the Captain admitted inwardly, a practically perfect taxidermic job.

"*Bon Dieu!*" cried Madame Audubon suddenly. "Is that a viper, my child?"

* From D. C. Peattie, *Singing in the Wilderness*. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

"Oh, yes," said the boy nonchalantly. "I bought it from one of the boys at the Green Farm. He had killed it only that day. A pity he couldn't have done it more neatly."

"Very thoughtless, truly!" chuckled the Captain.

Rosa observed, with a small fastidious nose uplifted, "It smells, in here."

"Well, now," began the Captain, clearing his throat.

"I want you to see this clutch of plover eggs, Father," his son said hastily. "Do you know how I blow them out?"

And before his father could answer he had thrown open a drawer and pulled out a series of drawings. He began to prop them up against the wall and on the floor, chattering.

"This whinchat is no good, but the green woodpecker isn't too bad, is it? And this hoopee. I traded a shoe buckle for its body."

Rosa gasped, but her brother rippled on like a brook. "Nightingales are hard to do just because they're so easy. I mean, they're such plain little birds. Oh, and here's a dab-chick. I winged that myself. I'm really an awfully good shot now, Father. I can put a bullet right through a tossed up cork, at twenty-five paces."

When there were no more pictures, he went to the wall and snatched down the fencing foils and flexed one judiciously in his long fingers.

"I'm quicker on my feet than I was. Do you want to take me on for a bout and see? If the ladies won't scream too much!"

"Perhaps," said the Captain, thumbing his chin. "I shall have to see your lesson books first."

"Now my dear Jean," broke in Madame Audubon placatingly, "remember that the boy has just got over the measles."

"Let us see the books he did before he had his measles," suggested his father liberally.

Madame made a hopeless little gesture with her plump hands, and Rosa looked cheerfully at her fingernails. With one glance at the Captain's face, his wife brusquely put the girl out and followed her.

Audubon reports that at the state of his formal studies,

he could only hang his head. His father looked at him with speculative eyes and walked very lightly out of the room, humming a little tune.

Next morning two wagtails were picking up a breakfast of beetles on the terrace, with jerky little clockwork runs, when the house door opened. The Captain and Jean Jacques emerged, followed by a servant bearing the boy's trunk and violin case. The wagtails bobbed away down the garden path in surprise. The autumn morning sparkled with dew, and the shadows of the trees in the orangery were long and velvety. From the wall a redbreast lisped his sweet autumnal song. But he could not hold back Jean Jacques. The future had rushed upon the boy, to carry him off.

CHAPTER XIII

AUTOBIOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE

STORY-TELLING

YOUR work on descriptive writing and on characterization has led you straight to the third kind of imaginative writing, narration, or the telling of stories. Any one of these three kinds of writing tends to borrow a little from at least one of the other two. You can describe a building, a rare bird, or the odors and sounds of a night in the country without telling a story. When you begin to describe an event, such as a race, you may be interested at first in the spectacle as a brilliant exhibition of color, lithe movement, the beat of horses' hoofs on the track, bursts of cheering; but your interest is likely to expand after the first impression, so that you begin to sketch the characters of the jockeys, the temperaments of the horses, and to study their reactions under the strain. Your continued description of the race includes the events themselves, the false starts, the various heats, the dramatic outcome. You have combined with pure description the story of the race. Whenever the element of action enters description, the writer reaches out for some of the methods of narration.

The character sketch, too, frequently borrows from

narration. A description of a young man will give you the angle of his hat, the shape of his nose, the color of his tie, the quality of his voice. A character sketch of the same young man may add details of his personality to indicate that he is a braggart. But as you discovered in the chapter on characterization, if you wish to convince your reader that this fellow is a braggart, you will show him in action, you will present an incident in which his behavior proves that he cannot resist blowing his own horn. You have characterized him most fully when you have used narration.

Narration, too, makes constant use of these two other types of writing. You may have pure description of an object in which you use no narration. You may give a character sketch by means of description and analysis, without emphasizing your picture by means of characteristic action. But when you begin to write narration, although your chief purpose now is to tell a story, you can hardly avoid the use of description and characterization. You can hardly avoid characterization because your story is always an account of a person doing something and feeling something. And that account inevitably shows what kind of person this character in your story is; in other words, you are involved in the business of characterization. But, you say, I may tell a story of an animal, a dog, a cat, or a lion cub. No matter. You are characterizing the animal. Bambi, in the story of the deer, is as vivid a character as one could meet. Consequently, whatever you have acquired in your practice of characterization will serve you well in narrative writing.

As for description, although your story should not

stop for pages of description of the hero's birthplace or the heroine's beauty, still you will fall back upon description constantly as a means of making visible to the reader the setting of the story, the appearance of the characters, the emotions which control them, the perils of sea and land and air with which they struggle. The amount of description you use will depend upon the kind of narrative you are writing. Only in the simplest form of story, like a child's Mother Goose rhyme, will you dispense entirely with description.

What then are the qualities peculiar to narration, if it employs so freely these other types of imaginative writing? It shares with description the power of stirring the reader's imagination, of giving him sensuous impressions. It shares with characterization the quality of presenting human beings to the reader.

Narration tells a story. That is, it presents not only people and sense impressions, but it presents people in action, in difficulties, working through problems, contending with each other, falling in love, dying, stealing bonds, committing murder, going to church, winning a political campaign. Your own attitude when you read description and when you read narration will reveal certain traits you expect in the latter form of writing. In a description you expect to receive pleasure from a heightened realization of a storm at sea, a flight of wild ducks, or a classroom in May. In a story you expect to have your curiosity roused about the outcome; you expect to have that curiosity satisfied. Does the captain succeed in bringing his vessel through the storm? Does the hunter behind the screen bring down his prey, or does he accidentally wound his guide? Does

the class succeed in cajoling the instructor into announcing a holiday? When a writer arouses curiosity as to the outcome of a situation or as to the process of development in a character, he is writing narrative.

When a narrator begins "Once upon a time," or "When I was a little boy," you begin to watch for events. Probably narration is the oldest form of prose and poetry, narration first by a story-teller as men gathered around a fire at a cave's mouth to listen to tales of prowess of their chief, or older tales of the glory of their tribe in hunting and in warfare. The man who told the story held that rôle of narrator or of bard because he could interest his listeners. He could stir their imagination so that they shared the exploits he narrated; he could fill them with horror, with fear, with pride, and above all, with the desire to listen until he had finished the story. They may even have known the stories he told, or have shared the exploits, and still they listened. Why?

People who nowadays listen to stories over the radio or read them in books find three kinds of enjoyment. They enjoy stories which repeat their own experiences, so that they can say, "Why, yes, that happened to me. I know a man just like that. I felt that way when I lost my job—when I fell in love." They enjoy stories which enlarge their horizons, stories of strange countries, of unknown people, of foreign customs, of impossible and romantic adventures. And finally, they enjoy stories which interpret situations or characters at which they have looked but which they failed to appreciate or to understand. Narration either emphasizes and interprets the reader's own experience, or it presents en-

tirely new experiences, giving a sense of vicarious living. It may, of course, combine the pleasure of recognition, the pleasure of understanding, and the pleasure of novelty.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The most natural kind of narrative is the autobiographical. Of our own volition we have composed, all of us, passages of our own biographies. Besides the required narratives of your experiences which you have all written in high school or preparatory school, besides the essay based on reminiscences which you may have been asked to write in this course, you have undoubtedly filled many a letter with stories of adventure on trips to the city, at college, on a cruise; and what you have not written down, you spontaneously pour forth in the locker room or over the dinner table. These are all bits of autobiography.

But you began much earlier. When you came home after your first days in school, did not Father or Mother ask you, "Well, what did you do to-day?" Did you not swell out your chest and tell of your triumphs in arithmetic or of successful assault and battery or of shaking hands with a real aviator? Or perhaps you whimpered out a tale of tragedy? Later, perhaps, somebody presented you with a diary, and you began to set down with great solemnity the important events that filled your days: birthday parties, games, sicknesses, broken friendships, picnics, dancing lessons, making the team, fires, Thanksgiving turkeys, the first cigarette, the discovery of poetry. Then, of course, you

have written letters, because you had to write or because you enjoyed the writing. And personal letters, when they are not lyrics or invectives, tend to autobiography.

Now all this has been training in personal narrative. How far have you profited by it? It might be well at this point to see whether you can do with any skill what you have done so often, whether you can write an autobiographical letter, and produce the kind of effect that you aim at.

EXERCISES

1. Take some experience that is so intensely vivid in your memory or so recent that you can recall the details. Decide what effect you wish to produce: to furnish clear information concerning something you have done or seen done; to make your reader relive some experience of yours in terms of physical sensation; or to make him realize an emotional or intellectual situation and its development. Realizing clearly the effect you are aiming at, write a letter as if to an older friend or relative. Be frank and informal in style, but do not permit yourself to use slang unless it is justified by its peculiar effectiveness. Test the effectiveness of your letter by reading it to yourself, and then improve on it if you can. Bring the letter to class, so that its effectiveness can be tried out there.

2. Read a piece of autobiographical narrative in a book of models, determine its chief purpose, and be prepared to point out the means by which it achieves that purpose.

THE POPULARITY OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Though the novel and the short story are undoubtedly the most popular forms of narration, biography

now runs a very strong third. Some autobiographies have shared this popularity. Two of the books more widely read than any novel during the past year, for example, are Clarence Day's *Life with Father*, and Anne Lindbergh's *North to the Orient*. The interest in Day's book lies in its vivid and unforgettable creation of the character of Father. Day's purpose in his autobiographical narrative was less to tell the story of his own experiences than to give in concrete episodes recalled from his youth this complete character picture of his father. Mari Sandoz, in *Old Jules*, has used autobiography to tell the story of her violent pioneer father.

North to the Orient, on the other hand, is a story of a remarkable adventure. It is autobiography, but the purpose here is to allow the reader to share the experiences of a flight across Polar regions to the Orient. It is far more than a narrative of facts, of water crossed and landings made. Read the chapter "Dark" and notice the way in which Anne Lindbergh conveys feeling. Adventure, to a sensitive person, is far more than a series of events. It is a series of emotional responses. As you read the chapter you share the strangeness of the Midnight Sun, the fear of darkness as a new experience when the plane heads south again, the excitement of the race to land before the last light is gone. Note the details of physical sensation, of thought, of feeling which Anne Lindbergh has used. The material itself is interesting, of course, but the method of handling it has created a real experience for the reader. At its best, autobiographical narrative will do this, quite as sharply as any great novel.

The demand for this kind of narration reaches over even to young readers, so that when David Putnam goes to the North Pole, his story of his own part in the adventure finds great popularity among the boys. William Beebe writes personal accounts of his discoveries in the Sargasso Sea; Edward Bok writes the story of his life; Mary Antin describes the struggles through which she went as an immigrant in *The Promised Land*; Robert Graves in *Goodbye to All That* writes an autobiography of his thirty-three years, more fascinating than any novel of the war.

You have in magazines like the *Atlantic* or *Harper's* snatches of autobiography, sometimes so personal that they are published anonymously, in which the writers set down their experiences with religion, or illness, or scientific disclosures, or marriage. The autobiographic narrative enters the affairs of daily life in its use by journalists to gain vivid effects in their study of conditions. For example, a reporter dresses herself like a beggar, spends several days in city streets, and then writes a series of autobiographic sketches in which she shows through her experience that the city has a stony heart or a soft heart, as the case may be. A minister plays the rôle of taxi-driver at night, and uses his experiences as a basis for expounding his beliefs about life in a city. There is a strong tendency to regard as valuable and interesting any direct and personal account of experience, since a frank relation of what the person saw and felt seems to increase our own experience of life.

EXERCISE

Read the passage from *Lost Paradise* by Mr. Coffin (p. 487). These pages end Coffin's autobiography of his childhood. Up to that point the book has given Peter's homesick recollections of life on the Maine sea-coast farm which the boy has left in order to attend school in a neighboring town. The scene in the passage reprinted here shows Peter's first return to the farm after some weeks in school. The significance lies in Peter's discovery that even this short absence has altered his relation to the farm, his feeling about his father. "You couldn't have everything. You had to give up something to get something else." This experience is one shared by many people. Notice the details which Coffin uses to suggest Peter's awareness of change. The old dog is gone, his father seems older, even the distance across the bay has shrunk. Can you recall in your own experience the hour or day when you made a similar discovery? It is one of the universal steps out of childhood.

Read other chapters of autobiography dealing with the youth of the author. Besides those already mentioned, the following may be recommended: Ruskin's *Praeterita*, Kropotkin's *Memoirs*, Gosse's *Father and Son*, Lewisohn's *Upstream*, Muir's *Story of My Boyhood and Youth*, Clarence Day's *Life With Father*. Note the purpose of each passage. Do you find other passages, like that from *Lost Paradise*, which remind you of experiences of your own?

THE MATERIAL

You may not have visited the Pole or the Sargasso Sea; you may not have cut a dash in the world. Yet you need not feel any dearth of autobiographic material. You have already passed through some of the crucial experiences of life, experiences possessing a kind of universal value because they are shared to some

degree by all people. You were born; you grew into childhood with certain traits developing, certain tendencies emphasized as a result of your surroundings, certain possibilities unfolding. You had certain family relationships. You became aware of the world outside of your family. You developed some religious attitude; either you broke away violently from conventional religious training, you grew indifferent to religion, or you had a period of intense religious experience. You had your first emotional experiences—friendship, “crushes,” hero-worship, love. You discovered certain social attitudes, such as rivalry, jealousy, a sense of fair play, class distinctions, standards of honor.

All of this material is interesting because it belongs to all people. Your interpretation of it strikes in the reader this note: “Why, yes, I remember that; I felt like that. Or I felt differently at that age.”

Then you had your own individual background for these experiences, and your own individual adventures. Your own town, city, country crossroads, gave an individual flavor to your life, just as your individual characteristics give that flavor to your personality. What part in your life has been played, if you were born in the country, by your familiarity with seasons, with growth of plants and animals, with isolated home life? You were born in a small town which has developed into an automobile manufacturing center. Or perhaps you have still more unusual material. You were born in Russia, or on shipboard, or in a South African town, or on a plantation. You were educated in foreign boarding schools; you had private tutors. Now you reach beyond the appeal of universal material into the inter-

est of the strange, the unusual. Whatever your material is, it has the possibility of great interest, provided you have developed the seeing eye, and the sensitive spirit.

HOW TO SELECT MATERIAL

You wish to tell a story about yourself, one to interest a reader. He will care little for a mere list of facts about your life. Be sure of that. He will tend to be interested in what most interests you, provided you have some sincerity and skill in setting it before him. Since it is not possible to develop in detail all the days of your life, try first to hit upon some centralizing idea for this particular story, some basis upon which you make your selection.

There are two large divisions into which types of autobiography might be classified. If you make a record of a camping trip, your emphasis is chiefly on fact; if you write an account of how you fell in love, your emphasis is largely on feeling. Autobiographic narrative usually resolves itself either into the kind which aims chiefly to relate facts—the objective type—or into that which aims chiefly to convey feeling—the subjective type. There is no hard-and-fast line between the two. You may have been lost in the woods during your camping trip; in that case the emotion of fear would probably take its place in your statement of the methods you used in starting a camp fire on a damp day. You may have fallen in love while you were crossing the Atlantic on your first trip abroad, and in that case the novelty and excitement of the voyage would not be entirely submerged by your emotional experience.

A narrative which devotes itself entirely to the statement of facts may be interesting; it may be only useful, as, for example, an informative type of newspaper article. But artistic narrative is supposed to create a certain amount of feeling.

For example, you may wish to write an account of a visit to one of the small chapels in the Baptistry at Florence. You might tell how you reached the Baptistry, armed with your guide-book. You might go on with some description of what you saw, pointing out that this chapel was shut off from the rest of the cathedral by railings; that within was a statue of the Virgin with two angels bearing torches; that a painting of the child Jesus, dimmed by time, hung on the dark wall; that candles flickered on either side of the small altar. You would select the details of the chapel which seemed to you interesting, and you would try to present them to your reader so that he would be able to visualize, in part at least, this small chapel fitted into an arc of the great Baptistry curve.

But suppose that you came upon this chapel for the first time just as a christening party entered it. The chapel takes on life. Something is happening there which has common human interest. You watch the priest make ready for his ceremony—devout perhaps, but a little bored; you note the anxiety and discomfort of the very young father and his attempt to look detached as if this baby belonged only to the mother; you see the nurse and aunts fuss over the small parcel, which seems to be getting restless; you feel the enjoyment of the rest of the onlookers when it screams indignantly at the splash of water in its face. Yet along

with all this interest in the action of the human drama is a heightened sense of the background and its significance to life through all the ages. At this small altar with the placid Virgin smiling down on them and the dim child Jesus intent in his dark canvas, Dante was christened. Candles, priest, ceremony, all seem fitting accompaniments to the business of starting this young person out in the great company of Italian artists and statesmen.

When you write this narrative of the christening, the descriptive details will fit into the action, become a part of it, serve to make it vivid, alive. Your emphasis will come on the part which impressed you, the human action and its significance to the race. You are writing autobiographic narrative, which is far more than the fact that you once visited this chapel. Your centralizing idea is the picturesque significance of this little chapel in the history of the people of Florence, and through literature, of the world.

You probably have a preference for one of the two general types of autobiographic writing, the objective or the subjective. That is, you find events themselves interesting, or you are more concerned with the interpretation of events, with some observation of the effect upon you of things that happened. Whichever type you prefer, you still need to hit upon a central idea about which you can group the material you wish to use in a narrative which can only be a fragment of your whole autobiography. Perhaps your father was a minister, a school superintendent, or a manager of one of a chain of stores, and throughout your youth the family moved from town to town. You could make an inter-

esting story of the succession of moves, the towns in which you lived, the friends you lost and the new friends you made, the difficulties of transporting your pet animals, and so forth. You would then have as your focus the fact of this somewhat nomadic existence, with its humorous and serious aspects. You might, on the other hand, interpret the effect upon you of this series of changes, the necessity of adjustment to a new place and to new companions. You might feel that the variety in your life had been a valuable experience, or that the lack of permanency had been disturbing to a child. You would use the same material, but you would have a different purpose. In either case you could make a good story because you would select your material with a definite purpose in mind.

Your chief interest may have been in books. A story of that interest—your early reading, volumes surreptitiously taken from the family bookshelves, borrowed from libraries and friends, your gradually changing tastes—would find many sympathetic listeners. Your interest may have been in sport, in outdoor life, in any one of innumerable things. You may have had a succession of hobbies. Any strong interest of your own is likely to offer an excellent focus for an autobiographic story.

You need, out of your experiences, to choose some center for the story you wish to write. This central idea need not be so inclusive that you can tie up all your life within it. It may have figured only during a certain period of your life. But if you will find a basis for your choice of material, a thesis or center about which you

can organize your sketch, you will have made one long step toward a good narrative.

METHOD OF WRITING AUTOBIOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE

Once you have decided upon the material for your autobiographic narrative, you are ready for the next step, the arrangement of the material in your story. You will find that a brief plan will be of use to you. You do not need a careful topical outline for a narrative, but if you will make notes of the important steps in the development of your skill in outdoor photography, or of the different family customs in a paper on "How We Celebrated Anniversaries and Holidays," or of the chief incidents in your adventurous summer in the Rockies or in a Canadian camp, you will avoid certain pitfalls. If you begin to write without any kind of scheme, you are likely to write too long a beginning, so that you have no space or time left for the last half of your paper; you are likely to miss a good arrangement of the events which might produce a climax; you cannot see clearly the proportion each separate incident should bear to the whole story. If you have a simple plan, you can settle some of these problems before you write the story.

Since your story is autobiographical, you probably will tell it in the first person. You may use any one of several methods, or a combination of them. You may tell the story indirectly, as reminiscences, in a running, pictorial summary of what happened and what you felt and thought. You may dramatize some

of the scenes, giving in action and dialog what you and the other characters said and did. You may use occasional snatches of dialog to emphasize important moments and characters, while most of the story is a panoramic survey. And you may combine these methods.

Avoid long and explanatory beginnings. Do not hesitate to let the reader know who you are, or what you were like, or what your purpose is in this sketch, or where you lived, or whatever else seems necessary to the story; but give him this information directly and sincerely. If you have a narrative of an exciting adventure, see to it that you arrange the incidents so that the reader is concerned about the outcome, and when you have presented the crisis as vividly as you can, stop. If you are giving a series of character pictures of interesting grandparents, great uncles, and other relatives, arrange the series so that there is some ascending interest, some order of increasing value. Frequently in autobiographic narrative the straight chronological order is the simplest and clearest. Sometimes, when you are collecting material for a central idea such as, "Why I am Afraid of Cats," or "I have always wished to dominate other people," you may find that you can arrange your details on a scale of increasing interest and importance.

There are no definite rules for form in autobiographical narration. You should have some reason for the arrangement you give the details or incidents in your story, either that the incidents happened in this sequence in time, or that the arrangement you have chosen tends to hold the interest of the reader because

of increasing importance and drama. Usually some variety in the method of handling, a combination of summarizing narrative and dramatic scene, is more vivid in its effect than the use of summarizing narrative alone. Begin as simply and swiftly as possible, remembering that quick suggestion is more interesting than long explanatory passages. The final incident, event, or group of details should be significant enough to deserve the prominence which its position at the end of the story inevitably gives it. Sometimes, in a narrative which is a study of emotional development rather than a series of exciting events, you can achieve an effect of pattern by the device of repetition, such as a restatement of your central idea.

When you come to the actual writing of your sketch, use the suggestions offered in the chapters on description and on characterization with regard to the selection of details, the various ways in which you can produce vivid effects.

EXERCISES

1. Write an account of your experience in working out some project, such as:

Keeping bees.

Raising vegetables.

Earning money in the summer by clerking in a store or working in a hotel.

Learning to sail a boat.

Managing a tournament of some kind.

Acting as camp councillor.

Training a puppy.

Selling magazine subscriptions.

In this exercise you should aim to be both informative and interesting.

2. Relate some experience which made a strong impression through physical sensations, such as :

A camping episode.

A hazing.

An accident.

Flying.

A fire.

Eating with chopsticks for the first time.

Skating down a river.

First view of the ocean.

The first long train journey.

3. Relate an experience that combines physical sensations with emotional reactions, such as :

A death.

High school commencement.

Sin and repentance.

A failure.

A success.

Discovering music or painting.

4. Write an autobiographic chapter on some phase of your intellectual development, for instance, as regards :

Religion.

Science.

Militarism.

Politics.

Unemployment.

Books.

5. Write a short autobiography (1000-2000 words) on "Why I am what I am."

MODEL AUTOBIOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE

LOST PARADISE *

by Robert P. Tristram Coffin

They were at Turkey Bridge, and then at the field where Peter had picked the gentians, then in the woods, and then at Buttermilk. The bay alongside the road on the right was the bay that touched the farm. But Peter made out as if he didn't care. All the same, he was beginning to sit up straighter. By the time they were at the Ram and its little water-cabin, he was sitting up and taking notice. The rain-drops fell on his nose from the lofty pines overhead, but his nose was lifting up and up. It was so long ago he had been here last that everything looked out of place. They got to the store before he expected it. The road seemed to have shrunk and shortened in the rain.

There was the farm, just across the bay. The smoke was curling up from the farmhouse roof like a rooster's wet tail feathers. Peter's heart had really begun to knock on his ribs. He was into the skiff before Ansel or Miriam. For once he did not argue with his brother over who should row. He took the oars up and got braced. He almost went off before his father was in. His father sat down hard and sudden on the stern seat.

Peter took a tall pine and notched it in the notch of his father's hat for his marker astern, and let go with both arms. He made a bee line for the point. The bay seemed strangely small. He was over at the tip end of the farm in no time. He looked along the huckleberry bushes and then along the rocks below. Snoozer wasn't there. He rowed along fast up to the Middle Oak Landing, keeping his face towards shore. No Snoozer at the Lower Oak. His dog wasn't at the Middle Oak, either. The stem of the skiff ground into the pebbles. Peter got out so fast he didn't stow the oars under the seat and forgot the killock. His

* From R. P. T. Coffin, *Lost Paradise*. By permission of the Macmillan Co.

father had to see to anchoring the boat. Snoozer must be locked up in the house. Peter hurried up over the slippery stones of the haulway.

Something struck Peter, and he stopped in his tracks and looked back. His father was slow in getting out of the boat. He put one leg over uncertainly, and then bent low to fetch over the other. Maybe it was because he was wet and cold and tired. But Peter had never seen his father like that before. He looked small—and old.

A chill struck into Peter. It wasn't from the mist that had begun to close in the day. He had known all along how this homecoming would be. But there was something more to it than he had expected. Something about his dog and his father. The cold grew in him and spread out. All at once, he didn't want to run up the pathway to the house. He waited on the sodden turf for the others to catch up with him. He could ask his father about Snoozer. But he would have bitten his tongue through before he would have done it. The chill was all through him. Perhaps the dog was sick. He wouldn't ask the question for anything in the world.

It was Ansel who asked. Peter's mind ran ahead of each word his father said.

"Oh, Snoozer? Well, you see, Ansel, your mother and I, we talked it all over. The dog was old. He was no use to himself any more, poor little sinner. He missed you boys terribly. After you left last time, he just didn't have any ambition. He was miserable all over. He couldn't get around the way he used to. We did it the easiest way we could, your mother and I. You know, he was almost blind. It was the best thing all round, for him and for all hands of us. Poor little critter."

Peter let them all go past him on the path. He stood still as a tree that has been dead for a whole season. He stood there till the others went around the front of the house and out of sight. He might have known what it was. At last, he put both hands deep into his pockets and walked slowly off the path into the piney woods. It was just a little way to the ledge where the lady slippers grew.

(Later Peter goes into the house, for supper and the evening. He thinks that everything seems smaller, and unfamiliar, and goes off to bed early.)

He lay beside his father, awake long after the man had dropped off to sleep. He thought of how white his father's hair was getting to be. All at once it came to him that there wouldn't be any other islands covered with firs that his father would tame and turn into furrows. His furrows were pretty well laid open behind him.

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Peter would make friends in Canaan. Uncle Thomas would come up for a visit now and then. It wouldn't be so bad. Peter would miss the water and boats as much as anything. His father said they would spend Summer vacations on the farm. It would be better than nothing.

But Peter knew he wouldn't be a part of things here any more. He wouldn't be a part of the house. He'd be like a caller in somebody else's house. . . .

Just a few miles and a few years in a town school would change everything. It was like crossing a bay. And the bay grew wider and wider, and became an ocean. Boys you knew and men you loved once would be on the other side of the earth. Barbara would be with them, too.

Just as he was going one foot after another down the stairs to sleep, Peter thought piece by piece of what living on the farm always would have been like for him if he had had his way and not gone to Canaan at all. . . . Peter could see himself easily there. Big as his father. Not getting wealthy, of course, but feeling good friends with the apple trees when they blossomed in May. Pitching hay in the daytime. But reading books, too, in the night. Long into the night. Teaching his sons how to swing a scythe. Knowing enough to tell the changes coming in the weather, days and nights ahead. Taking the right time to fish. Feeling good out among the hills of growing corn when the dew was still on the long, crinkly leaves. Gathering honey from the descendants of his father's bees, in the hives his father had

built.—His father made things to last through the lifetime of his sons. Picking apples from the trees his father had set out.

You couldn't have everything. You had to give up something to get something else. Apples?—What was it about apples? He was trying to think. . . . He was too far down the stairs to straighten it out. Apples? . . . Apples of knowledge—yes, that was it! You had to choose.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SHORT STORY

THE ILLUSION OF REALITY

A READER may accept autobiographic narrative as true, since the writer says that these things happened. Even in autobiography, however, the reader is more interested if the writer convinces him of the reality of the story by the vividness and the plausibility of its handling. A reader of a short story or a novel has no initial grounds for belief. He knows that he is reading fiction. But like the reader of autobiography, he wishes to believe that the story might have happened. The characters and the events must seem to be real. This illusion of reality is a fundamental quality in good fiction. The child believes his fairy story, the errand boy believes his dime thriller, the more sophisticated reader believes a character story of Chekoff or Mansfield. The reader's feelings may be that this did happen exactly as the writer says, or that it might have happened just that way. There is a slight difference in the attitudes, but both involve the matter of plausibility. Each reader believes his story while he reads it

because the writer has woven a texture of details concrete enough, significant enough, to permit the reader to enter the story by means of his own imagination, and thus to share the feelings and experiences of the story characters.

A story must sound as if it had happened or could happen; it must convey a sense of reality, whether it is in the form of phantasy or realism. The simplest solution then would seem to be to tell only true stories. But is truth always interesting, or even credible? In your search for fiction material you will come across friends who will offer you their own strange experiences with the altruistic desire to help you out. Almost never can you take over these narratives. When you do, you will find that you have to reconstruct them to keep them from sounding both dull and improbable. They bear the additional disadvantage of being second-hand experiences, but quite as frequently your own true tales fail to move the reader. A story does not create an illusion of reality because it really happened. The effect of truth lies in the handling. You may have an entirely absurd situation, such as Mary Roberts Rinehart's productions in the early "Tish" stories, but if you back it up with grave and convincing detail as she did, you may secure an illusion of reality which reaches the emotions of your readers.

Notice in your own fiction reading what a large part of your pleasure comes from this illusion of reality. When a writer persuades you that the characters are possible, when he allows you to watch the events and to share the feelings of the story, then you have the kind of satisfaction you expect from fiction.

WHAT IS IMAGINATION?

Does this fundamental requirement of the illusion of reality offer any suggestions as to where the writer is to find his material? Autobiographical narrative, which you have been studying and writing, deals chiefly with actual events, emotions, experiences. You state that certain things are true. They really happened. The reader accepts that statement, and his interest in the narrative depends, as we have discovered, upon the handling and the material.

In fiction, however, you are free to construct characters and experiences. You "make up a story," as a child would say; you imagine events and feelings and people. Just what is imagining? An amateur writer has a tendency to conceive of imagination as a lovely, unfettered, far-roaming attribute, in no way connected with the actual experience of the writer or with the affairs about which he knows. Imagination does perform wonderful feats; it produces strange and original results. But these results, whether they are in the realm of machinery and inventions, or in the field of realistic fiction, are always combinations of old, familiar materials. Just what does this mean to you as a writer?

You say that you wish to write a story of Siam, although you have never been out of America, and you assert that you can use your imagination to furnish the details of background, of feeling, and of characters, which are necessary if the story is to seem real. Just what happens when you try to write this story? Your imagination is forced to rely upon second-hand material, picked up in geographies, in stories already

written, in motion pictures. For imagination does not operate without material. Your picture of Siam, then, is a rehash of random, indirect impressions, unoriginal, and usually unconvincing.

When you work with your own first-hand material, you remove a serious handicap. In simple terms, this means that you should write about the kind of towns you know best, the types of people with whom you are most familiar, the kinds of emotional experiences you have felt. The fact that Siam seems more interesting to you because you have never been there does not mean that your story about Siam would be more interesting to the reader. He would prefer a story about Salt Lake City, if you know that town. Your imagination is your ability to make new combinations of pieces of your own experience. You need first of all, then, to believe in your own material and to search that for your stories. As you allow your imagination to play with characters, events, places which you know, you discover that you have far greater resources than you have realized from which to select the elements that will bring conviction to the reader.

Perhaps you are thinking that you have little material of your own for stories, because you are young and have not as yet had many dramatic experiences. But a trip around the world has not in itself the possibility of better stories than a walk down the main street of your home town. Traveling salesmen spend their lives on the road, but they are rarely good writers. Your family is an experience, or many experiences; your friends, your own feelings, the stages

through which you have passed as you grew out of childhood. All of these have the universal human elements out of which a writer builds his stories. Not that you use family and friends directly for copy, nor that you are limited to autobiographic fiction. You have experiences of life, less perhaps than you will have ten or twenty years from now, but just as interesting and just as useful for fiction purposes. If you have lived in Georgia, write stories about Georgia. If you have spent a summer on a dude ranch or in Oregon, use those settings and the people who belong in them. But if your only experience of Chinatown is from a sight-seeing bus, or your only acquaintance with thugs is in newspaper stories, you will be wiser not to attempt stories of opium dens or of terrible crimes. You are not limited to actual people and events you have known. But if you use your imagination and your power to recombine material upon the types of character which you know at first hand, upon the places you have lived in, upon feelings you understand, you will have an excellent beginning in the direction of reality.

The problem then becomes one of technique. How are you to convey to the reader this illusion of reality which you feel? The complete answer to that question involves most of the business of making and writing a story, such as the presenting of characters, the arranging of events, the work out of the drama itself, and finally the choice of word or phrase in the writing. We have already worked on characterization. Before going on to these other story problems, suppose you look over your own material.

EXERCISES

1. Make a list of five places which you know well enough to use as the setting for a story. Write a brief paragraph about each place, suggesting its individuality, such as a country drugstore on a hot Saturday evening, a college town in late September, a tourist camp.

2. Make a list of five characters whom you know well enough to use in stories, writing a few sentences of description and comment about each.

Notice the relation between authors and their material. Sherwood Anderson writes of Winesburg, Ohio; Willa Cather writes of the Western country she knows; Edna Ferber writes often of Chicago. Booth Tarkington writes of Penrod and Gentle Julia and Alice Adams, each of them a Middle Western character. Tarkington may never have known a real Penrod, but he has known more than one small boy in Indiana. Kipling wrote his famous stories of India after he had lived there, and Scott Fitzgerald jumped into fame with a novel about the college life he knew at first hand.

The material out of which you can make your best stories is already yours; look it over and decide which parts of it you wish to use in fiction.

WHAT IS A SHORT STORY?

A short story is not merely a story that is short. It has a completeness of effect which distinguishes it from a chapter in a novel, or from a few pages of autobiography, or from the character sketch. In "A Student in Economics," for example, Charlie Wingate's struggle against poverty, against fatigue, against indifference is ended when Doctor Kenshaw

marks down his precise little F as Wingate's semester grade in Economics. You may not know in detail what will happen to Wingate for the rest of his life, but you know that his valiant attempt to work his way through college has failed. Without that final step, the story would remain a character study of Wingate. Poe's story, "The Cask of Amontillado," completes its action of revenge with the sealing of the masonry. De Maupassant's story, "The Necklace," reaches the end of the action, as well as the full meaning, with the disclosure that the jewels were paste. The reader of a short story wishes to know what happens to the characters he meets, how the affair ends, whether the boy resists temptation, whether the officer saves his ship, whether the two young lovers overcome family objections or economic obstacles. A novel may, of course, create this same desire in the reader, and offer, finally, the same satisfaction in its conclusion. But the novel has time to deal with intricate human affairs, to trace change in character, to present many people and many scenes. The shortness of the story limits the author to one idea, one problem, not too many characters, few scenes. The novel is like a series of mural paintings, the short story is one small canvas, complete, well defined. The novel is an entire symphony, the short story a short program piece.

In the most common form of the contemporary American short story, then, you have a situation which involves a problem or a struggle, and at the end the outcome of the struggle or the solution of the problem. The two factors, problem and solution, are the distinctive marks of the story as distinguished from other

forms of narrative writing. The conflict offers the quality of drama which readers expect, and the solution gives the satisfaction of form and finish. There are stories of a different type, experimental work in little magazines, stories such as Chekoff and Katherine Mansfield wrote, in which you are given a picture of a situation without movement toward any solution. You see how people feel toward each other, what their relationships are, but you have no working through to a change in their relationship. Frequently stories of this type do not tell a story; they present a mood or a phase of life. They give the reader the pleasure of recognizing truth without the pleasure which a more formal story gives, that of suspense and satisfaction. Sometimes they demand more of the reader in the way of sympathy and insight, and more of the writer in the way of penetration and skill in handling. They need some added quality of beauty or wisdom or intensity or significance to compensate for their lack of movement. We call them plotless stories because there is no progress of events, one causing the next until the end is reached. The most pronounced difference between stories of this type and the usual American story is that in the former the writer intends to give a picture or an impression of a human situation with drama sometimes suggested but not developed; in the latter the writer intends to show the dramatic situation, and carry it through to some end, to show the consequence of the conflict.

Since movement and change are as frequent in the lives of human beings as are moods and unresolved conflicts, each type of story has its legitimate place.

It is wise for the beginner to practise the requirements of form in the short story before attempting to create his own form. It may be difficult to think of form in connection with a story, which seems to be a succession of words on a few pages. You can't touch it with your fingers, as a sculptor can touch his statue. You can't see it flat on a canvas, enclosed in a gold frame. Nor can you reduce it to definite rules, so many lines, so many accents, such a rhyme scheme, as can a poet with his sonnet. Form in a story is really a question of method, of how the story is made, and a study of form becomes a study of the methods used and perfected by good writers to give their stories the greatest possible effect upon the readers, this effect being measured in terms of interest, of emotional response, of amusement, and sometimes of deepened understanding of life. The rest of this chapter presents a brief study of the material out of which stories are made, and the methods of handling this material.

PLOT

The word "plot" means merely the plan of a story, the actual outline of events within the story before the details of setting and characterization and all the other trimmings have been added. It is the framework which you should see clearly before you begin the writing of the story. It is the skeleton of the story itself. It states the problem or conflict, which when solved, gives your story its quality of completeness and drama. When you think of your stories in terms of what happens, what

makes this happen, and how does it end, then you are thinking in terms of plot.

People spend their lives in working for things, usually against opposing forces. They wish to possess something—wealth, love, happiness, fame; they wish to escape something—punishment, hatred, fear, death. A boy tries to win a race or a tennis game; a girl tries to get into a sorority or to have a career; the few survivors of a shipwreck ration food and water and struggle to stay alive until rescue comes—all these people are engaged in conflicts. The outline of events in each case would constitute the plot. The story about each would present the situation and the tendency or trait of character which was to produce the ending of the problem. Someone once described a short story thus: a man in a hole tries to get out of it. The hole may be some physical circumstance; he may be lost in the woods without fire or food. It may be social circumstance; he may be struggling to make a living for his family, or running for governor. It may be psychological; he may be in conflict with desire within himself. The end of the story may show him unable to escape, or may show him triumphant. The point is that at the end of the story the reader has no doubt about the solution. You can't leave the shipwrecked men adrift on the ocean. They must either perish or find safety.

EXERCISE

Write the outlines for three possible short stories, stating the problem, the difficulty, or the conflicting forces; the events which lead to the end in which the problem is solved, the difficulty overcome, the conflict settled; the end itself.

You may wish to write some of these stories later. At present merely write out the plans for them. Look back at your notes for settings and characters, to see whether you can use any of them.

ELEMENTS OF A STORY

The elements out of which a story is made are the characters, the events in which they are concerned or their actions, the setting of the story, and frequently some theme or idea which the story proves. The emphasis in a particular story may fall upon the characters, the action, or the theme, sometimes even upon the setting, but the various elements must all be present. Suppose that we take up each of these elements in turn, to see how they are related to each other in a story, and to discover, if possible, how a writer may start from any one of them to construct his story.

1. The Characters

There is an old question about which writers and readers have argued: which is more important in a story, characters or plot? The answer to such a question probably varies in accordance with each story. But whatever you think about it yourself, you must admit that you can have no story without characters. Your interest may lie in the action, if you are writing a story of adventure, but you must have a hero to escape from danger, or to quell the mutiny, or to rescue the entombed miners. Your reader will be concerned about the fate of this hero to the degree to which you have created him with vividness and reality. In a story which

emphasizes character you may deal with a personality which is more complex and subtle than that of the hero. Your problem here will be that of finding a situation in the life of your character which will dramatize for the reader the qualities he possesses.

The difference between the character sketch and the story in which the chief interest lies in character, depends upon the writer's purpose. In the sketch the writer wishes to give a convincing picture of the character, so that the reader may realize what kind of person this is, how he looks, how he tends to behave. In the story, he wishes to show how the traits of this character determine his action in a crisis of his affairs. The problem with which the character is faced, the conflict in which he is engaged, the conclusion which comes about as a result of some trait in his personality—these things mark the difference between the story and the sketch. You might write a vivid character sketch without including any situation which mattered much to the character, which would affect his own life or his relation to other people. Your reader would have the pleasure of recognizing the character, without being moved emotionally by what he did or felt. The character story on the other hand, attempts to select a situation which has significance and emotion for the character, and thus for the reader. The character has fallen in love, he is threatened with disgrace, he is confronted by temptation, he is struggling to escape the domination of another person; he is, in a word, in a situation in which his own intense feeling is involved, in which something important is at stake, whether happiness, reputation, his personal relation to someone

whom he loves; he must do something, and what he does will have consequences for himself and often for other people.

The character story may begin in the author's mind as a desire to present a certain kind of person. This person is, in the case of the best imaginative writers, not a photograph from real life, not just a reporter's version of someone interviewed. He is rather a composite. The writer has been looking at people, he has enjoyed some of them, been bored by others, been annoyed, delighted, wholly captivated, merely curious at some. He has arrived at certain general conclusions about human characteristics such as oversensitivity, egotism, flirtatiousness, charm. When he thinks of a character for a story, he draws from these general conclusions and not from some one human being he has watched, details enough to build up a new character, one he has created and can consequently use in his story. Margaret Ayer Barnes said recently that she could no more put a real person into a story than she could invite a story character to take a vacant place at a dinner party. It is hard to convince the reader that this is the process a writer must follow. The reader says, "Why, you must have known my Uncle John! He was fond of dogs, and he used a moustache cup, and his wife died, too." It does not occur to the reader that other wives have died, many men have liked dogs, and moustache cups were once a common cupboard accessory.

Take such a story as Ring Lardner's "I Can't Breathe!" Do you think that Lardner copied directly from life? Isn't it more likely that he had watched

more than one young girl, light as thistledown, superficial as cellophane, shifting more easily on the breezes of fancy than any weather vane ever erected, until he decided such a girl might make an amusing character story? When he had reached that stage, which is a generalization about a character tendency or trait based upon past observation, he had next to create his girl as an individual, with her own charm, her own appearance, her setting, her position in life, and all the rest.

Turn back to the chapter on the character sketch to remind yourself of the various methods you have at your command in presenting a character. You have decided upon the kind of person you wish to write about; next you must create the person. Some writers work out careful sketches of their story people before they write the stories, in order to have a complete realization of the characters. Sometimes such a sketch will lead the writer toward the situation which he needs to make the story. For the character is only the beginning.

The writer must find the story which is to set the character before the reader, not as a picture nor as an analysis, but in terms of life, of character showing itself under pressure. Ring Lardner knew that this girl he had chosen would move lightly from one affair to another, excited but not appalled if her young men happened to overlap. He allows her to speak for herself, thus making use of her vocabulary and idiom as well as of her comments to characterize her. And he piles up the young men, to make his story.

Perhaps one way to a story is by questions. What

kind of situation would test this man's integrity? What would prove this man a boaster? Not just a picture of his boasting, but a situation in which he boasted in spite of danger to himself or injury to others. When the story has its inception in a character, the writer's next search is for the situation which will involve that character in matters of moment to him, of emotional weight for both him and the readers.

When the story arises in the writer's mind as a piece of action, or as a theme, then the writer begins to question himself about the characters. Who would act thus, who would cherish the hope of revenge, or refuse to accept defeat, or show that environment may be stronger than heredity? Again the writer has to work out, preferably on paper, a sketch of each character, with notes about anything from his parents to his hobbies, anything which may help create the character as an individual. The writer's problem when he begins working on a story in this way is to find a character who will fit the intended action, whose reasons for action will be convincing, who will carry the story to its end not because the writer makes him do so, but because his personality would work out in that way.

The direction in which the short story has made the most decided gains during the years since 1900 when it has developed into such a popular form of fiction in this country of ours, is without question in this direction of better characterization. Readers are no longer content with the old stereotyped heroines, villains, heroes. They fancy that they understand a little more about human psychology, about themselves and their neighbors. Whether they do or not, at least they

wish the people in the stories they read to be visible, to talk like people, to act from inner motives, to give evidence of human feeling. There is more interest today than formerly in the character story, perhaps because readers wish to find out more about what human beings are really like, including themselves. It might be well to reread the last section of the chapter on the character sketch, with its comments upon the equipment of the writer.

Several weaknesses in the handling of character appear so often in the manuscripts of beginners that it might be useful to list them:

First. The writer borrows characters either from fiction or from motion pictures (which probably have borrowed the same characters from older fiction). He presents to the reader the crabbed old man whose heart is softened by a child's hand, usually at Christmas time: the lovely young girl who gives up her lover and marries the wealthy, elderly suitor, to save her family from ruin; the brutal father who turns his daughter out of the house—"Never cross my threshold again!"—preferably into a snowstorm. These are a few of many recurrent types. The situations are hackneyed, the characters tattered paper dolls.

Second. The characters are not these old familiar faces, but neither are they living people. The writer has not known them very well, he has not worried much about them, he has not built them up in his own mind before he set them down in his story. They are little more than names, with perhaps a phrase or two about their clear-cut features or their flashing smiles; their dialog lacks the tone of real talk, being too much

the writer himself, not as he talks but as he writes—they have, in short, not yet come alive because the writer gave them too little concern.

Third. The characters are definitely unreal, because the writer has attempted to present people outside his own experience. He longs to write of Chinese bandits, of ruthless gangsters, of anyone who seems romantic because he is remote from the writer's own experience. It is not always easy to persuade a writer that he cannot have imagination enough to compensate for lack of direct experience. He tries to create his character out of second-hand material, odds and ends of reading, of pictures, and the character bears always the hallmark, *used before*.

The way to avoid this weakness in handling characters is clear. Draw your characters from your own observation and experience. You have already more genuine material in your possession than you can ever use, if you will turn to it. When you draw your character from a town where you have lived, from a country village where you grew up, from a seashore where you spent many summers, you begin with a stock of information. You know how he might dress, how he might talk, what kind of furniture his house might have, what he might do if he were frightened, or elated, or bewildered, or angry, what he expects of his children, what he hopes for himself. If you don't know all of these things about your character, at least you have some basis for constructing what you need, out of your experience with men somewhat like him. For in the handling of character, as in all other ele-

ments of the story, a writer cannot learn too early to trust his own material and to make the most of it.

2. Events

Your story may arise from your interest in certain traits of a character. It may grow out of your desire to set down a series of exciting events of which you have intimate knowledge, placing less emphasis upon character and more upon the action of the story. A tramp steamer is in an Eastern port; the captain is dead, the crew has deserted, the second mate must bring the ship back to San Francisco with a shanghaied crew. Your story concerns the series of catastrophes—storm, mutiny, loss of rudder—through which the second mate has to fight. His traits are courage and perhaps shrewdness; the interest in the story lies in the vividness with which the events are given. You will see, however, that the element of plot is the same as in the character story. You have a situation which involves conflict, and a final solution of that conflict. Here the character works upon circumstances produced by other people or by fate; he must, however, work out his own ending. Stories of physical conflict and difficulty, such as Western stories, war stories, aviation stories, sea stories, and stories about football matches, golf tournaments, tennis, and yacht racing usually emphasize the events. They are, however, still stories about human beings, and the characters should have both visibility and reality, and should behave consistently.

You may have a story like O. Henry's "Furnished

Room," in which the interest lies in the combination of circumstances rather than in the revelation of personality. A young man goes to New York to search for his sweetheart, who had gone to the city for a theatrical career. After some months he rents a room in a shabby house in the theatre district, finds the room haunted by the scent of mignonette the girl had always used, questions the landlady about the former occupants, and in despair, turns on the gas. At the end of the story you discover that the landlady had lied about the previous occupant of the room.

There are stories in which events and characters are more evenly balanced, stories in which the action is concerned with social rather than physical conflict. The "Revolt of Mother" is such a story, and "What Do You Mean, Americans?" is another, although in the latter the theme is as important as the action. Stories of business, of family relationships, of love, are often made of people in some of the tangles of contemporary life. The characters need to be more than paper dolls if their difficulties are to matter to the reader. But the main interest in the story rests upon the working out of the drama, rather than upon the development of character.

Where do writers find stories in which action or situation is the element emphasized? And how do they work them out? Usually the beginning of such a story is an incident, or a small piece of action, not enough in itself for a story. It is seldom that a writer stumbles upon a whole story, neatly worked out for him. He finds a newspaper item, he hears a bit of gossip, he sees the rum-runner in the bay. Then his work begins.

I can imagine that "The Revolt of Mother" started in the author's mind after she had driven along New England roads, looking at small, shabby gray farmhouses, with enormous well-built barns towering above them. The cows were well cared for, she may have thought. What about the wives? And with that question, the building of the story had started.

Mr. Steele, in "What Do You Mean, Americans?" may have seen some incidents of rum-running, or heard the details of it on a New England coast he knew well. But he did not write the incident as he heard it. He began to think about it. A girl had been concerned in it, a granddaughter of a New Englander, along with a truck driver of Greek descent, and some Portuguese men. What did it mean? How far did it repeat incidents of the early life on the same coast? By the time he had the story ready to write, the story element which interested him was the theme. This is what America is now, and it repeats what it has been from the beginning.

In Katherine Brush's story "Night Club" you find several stories deftly suggested in sharp, vivid scenes. It is not likely that the author overheard all those snatches of revealing dialog. She may, however, have seen an elderly indifferent attendant in a dressing room of a night club waiting for a chance to escape her surroundings in the pages of a confession story magazine. She then saw the irony in the situation; here, with fragments of real drama in the air, the attendant heard and saw nothing beyond the dullness of her routine duties. The next step in the author's planning of the story was the selection of brief scenes which would

hint at the drama under the gay surface of the night club. What kind of people would be guests there, and what might lie behind rouge and lip-stick? The story answers the question.

3. *Theme*

There is a third possible source for stories, your desire to state a theme. You wish to prove some statement about human affairs, such as "Environment is stronger than heredity," "The honor system in colleges is good (or bad) for weak students," "The ugly duckling may become the swan." You usually do not state your theme anywhere in the story; that would point the moral too openly. But you hunt for characters and a situation which prove your thesis. You will discover that your thesis is never really proved until you have worked the conflict through to its solution. The way things finally turn out is the proof you offer of your statement. Sometimes the theme has occurred to you as a result of one situation you have watched, one character you have observed. Usually a good theme is a general conclusion based upon past experience.

The theme in Steele's story "What Do You Mean, Americans?" is really his answer to that question. Behind it, in the author's mind, are countless incidents which he has watched and considered, and behind it, too, is a definite point of view, an attitude of mind about the development of our country. He may have heard old men bewailing the destruction of the country, and been moved to write the story as an answer. In any case, he knew his theme before he wrote the story.

"A Student in Economics" * has a theme, nowhere announced in so many words, but implicit in the action of the story. See if you can state it.

Whether your story deals primarily with character, action, or thesis is a matter of emphasis; you always have characters, you always have some kind of action, and your story always makes some comment upon life. In pure adventure stories the thesis may be an obvious one, such as "Courage always wins." You may find it illuminating, in testing the unity and completeness of your story plan, to make a statement of the underlying idea. If, in a brief good sentence, you can sum up the purpose of your story, you may have assurance that your plot has firmness. A sketch seldom proves any thesis; it may suggest one. A story, since it reaches a conclusion, does offer proof of some conclusion about life.

If a theme is the starting point for a story, the author must be sure that he selects characters and situations which work out the idea with reality. Otherwise the story becomes a piece of propaganda, and the reader says that the writer has warped his material to suit his idea. Use the question method again. Ask yourself: what situation would prove this idea of mine? what kind of characters? Never forget that the theme is only the starting point, and that it must be translated into terms of action, character, and feeling before it becomes a story.

WHAT KIND OF SITUATION MAKES A GOOD STORY?

There are several general principles about the kind of situation or human affair which is appropriate for

* See page 536.

the short story. It must be simple enough to permit handling within the length of a short story; that is, it must not involve too many important characters nor too many events, for the obvious reason that you have not space enough to develop them vividly. It should be a situation which is important enough for the characters concerned in it so that the reader may have curiosity or anxiety or hope about the outcome. A fist-fight between two boys has the element of conflict, to be sure. But it probably lacks significance for the participants, aside from the physical outcome, so that it is inadequate for a story. If the two boys are rivals for the favor of a pretty little girl, the fight may become part of a story in which emotions are concerned. A simple conflict, such as a fight or a football match, must be tied up with more important human affairs before it will make a story.

EXERCISES

Make outlines of several stories, giving briefly the following items:

The chief characters and the traits of each which are important.

The dramatic situation, with the elements of struggle, of opposing desires, of conflict.

The steps taken by the characters toward the climax, or solution of the struggle.

The underlying idea or thesis which the story presents.

Make these outlines brief, clear, writing definite sentences instead of broken phrases. Try outlines for stories of different types.

After you have this story outline, you can continue with your planning still further. Just how are you go-

ing to tell the story? What parts of it will you give fully and what parts will you summarize? Where are you going to begin? The following sections contain suggestions about these technical problems.

ANGLE OF NARRATION

Any person who has tried to get at exactly what happened in a certain situation which aroused his curiosity knows that he gets a different version of the affair from each person whom he questions. The reason is not that humanity is given to telling untruths but that each person tends to view the situation from his own angle. Through his training, his temperament, his part in the affair, he emphasizes the aspects of it which are most interesting to him. Every judge and jury realizes that many witnesses are necessary before it is possible to decide what really happened.

Browning, in his *Ring and the Book*, gives to the reader a realization of how the viewpoint of the narrator influences his tale. Edgar Lee Masters, in *Domesday Book*, uses the situation of the sudden death of a girl. To solve the mystery of it, he presents the different stories of people who have known the girl well. As each one tells of the girl he knew, the reader sees a different person develop. Yet each one is telling the truth so far as he knows it.

One of the first questions which you have to decide in planning your story is: *Whose story is this?* Suppose, for example, that you had planned a story of two young people who are in love and who wish to be married. The young man is devoted to his mother, who

feels strongly that he is too young to settle down. She manages by her appeal to the affection of her son and her clever handling of certain undomestic characteristics of the girl, to separate the young pair. The girl sees through her methods and struggles to retain what belongs to her; but the boy, blinded by his love for his mother, yields to her influence and breaks the engagement.

Three people are concerned in this story. They all take part in the same situation, starting together at its beginning, and solving its problem together at its end. From the angle of the mother, she has saved her boy from the burden of a family before he is ready to undertake it, and from a girl whom she considers an unsuitable wife. From the angle of the girl, she has been involved unwillingly in a struggle to retain the love which she had won; and she has felt that the opposition of the mother arose from her jealousy; also, in spite of all her efforts, she has seen the older woman undermine her son's love and win him back to herself. The story told from the girl's angle will be entirely different from that told from the mother's. Equally different from either of them will be the story of the bewildered boy, torn in his affections, insecure in his judgment about his duty; the bond to his mother is close enough so that he cannot allow himself to listen to the girl's version of her conduct, and the mother's earlier influence is strong enough in its present effect to make him yield finally to her persuasions. The story told from his angle would be still a third story.

The amateur author realizes the importance of the thought and feelings of each person in his story, and

fearing that the reader will miss some of the significance of which he is so well aware, he tells everything he knows about each person. In this particular situation, he would show you the mother in action and then he would tell you what she thought and felt about her problem. Then he would shift to each of the other characters and do the same by them. At the end nothing is left concealed.

The skilled writer realizes certain possibilities in this technical point of the angle of narration and makes use of it to sharpen and focus his story. Instead of disconnected, shifting narrative in which the reader becomes identified first with one character and then with another, and which leaves him at the end without any real interest or concern in any one of them, the story becomes deepened into a thorough emotional understanding of one character, and unified into a single impression upon the reader. The writer recognizes the time limit of the short story and does not try to give his reader the material of a book.

How can you decide which angle will bring out best the story which you wish to tell? First by realizing the different angles which are at your service, and then by an experimental testing of your material to see which one fits it best. A detective story would demand an altogether different treatment from an intimate character story; a story which covers a long period of years, from one that limits its action to a day. The first thing then is to find out what one gets from different angles. A brief outline of possible angles may help as references when we discuss them:

- I. Objective angle
- II. Subjective angle
 - 1. Omniscient author
 - 2. Main character
 - a. First person
 - b. Third person
 - 3. Minor character
 - a. First person
 - b. Third person

1. Objective Angle

Sometimes a story tells itself entirely to the eye and ear of the reader, just as it tells itself on the stage. The characters talk and act; we listen and watch and draw our conclusions, which, if the story or the play is well done, coincide with the conclusions of the author. This is the objective or dramatic method, a strictly scenic form. One episode follows another without the interpretation which we get from knowing the feelings and thoughts of the characters. The author allows no admission into the private mind of any character.

Ernest Hemingway's story, "The Killers," is a good example of the objective method. "Night Club," by Katherine Brush, is objective, except for one or two brief comments. Thomas Hardy's story, "Three Strangers," is a distinguished example of the objective method. The author lets you look into the home of the shepherd just as you would note the scenery of a play when the curtain first rises. You see the neighbors assembled there for a christening party. Presently a stranger knocks on the door and enters. The shepherd makes him welcome and he sits down by the fire. Then

another knock comes on the door and a second stranger enters. We are not told how the first stranger feels, but we see him pick up the poker and stir the fire intently. The second stranger, warmed by the mead, reveals that he is the hangman looking for a sheep stealer. He and the first stranger drink to each other just as a faint knock on the door announces a third stranger. The newcomer stares at the two jovial drinkers, trembles violently and flees. Just then the alarm gun from the prison announces the escape of a prisoner. The hangman and all the guests prepare to give chase to the fear-stricken man who has just fled. The house empties, but almost at once the first stranger returns and begins to devour food. Before he finishes, the hangman enters just as quietly; they finish the mead, shake hands, and part. Meanwhile the pursuers capture the third stranger and bring him back, only to have him explain to them that his terror was caused by the sight of his condemned brother drinking with the executioner who was searching for him. The third stranger is released, his brother is never found, and so the story ends. Nowhere are we told how anyone feels or what anyone thinks. We watch them show their emotions just as a good actor reveals to his audience by gesture and stage business his state of mind. When we go back and pick up clues about the occupations of the men and the way they looked and acted during crucial moments, we find the tale entirely convincing. These happenings have gone on right under our eyes and we believe them just as we give credence to a well-acted play.

The advantage of using this objective method lies

in the dramatic effect if the situation is sharp enough to bring it about. The disadvantage lies in the lack of any interpretation of the characters. Often what a man is thinking or feeling is as interesting as what he does. The story writer does not always wish to limit himself to this objective angle.

2. Subjective Angle

In a story told from the subjective angle, the author reveals to the reader through his own statements and through those of his characters some of the thoughts and feelings of those characters. In the objective method no interpretation is given except by suggestion and by action. In the subjective method the author includes feeling and thought. Now if he is a beginner, he will wish to tell you all that the characters think and feel, thus becoming the omniscient author who knows all about all of his characters, and who tells as much as he pleases about each one. By this method he does not focus upon any one character, and he usually succeeds in interesting the reader in none of them. His story will lack both unity and intensity.

At times, if the author has clearly in mind a problem which can only be presented by shifting the angle from one character to another, he may be omniscient with excellent results. Katherine Mansfield in "Prelude" and "At the Bay" shifts her angle from one member of the family to another, but so skillfully that at the end the reader has complete unity of feeling about the family. If the writer is sure of the effect which he wishes to produce, he may be able to handle his story

from the omniscient angle. Too often, however, he merely brands himself as a beginner who knows no other way to tell the story.

The skillful author frequently limits himself to the angle of the main character. The character may tell the story himself, in the first person, as does Bill, in Jo Pagano's story, "The Disinherited," and the girl in Ring Lardner's "I Can't Breathe." The author may tell the story through the main character, using the third person, as in "A Student in Economics," or in Martha Foley's "One With Shakespeare." The author stands at the character's shoulder, giving scenes as he sees and hears them, suggesting the feeling and thought of other characters either in dialog and action, or through the main character's knowledge of them. The reader can then follow the story through this character without being jerked away from him into other personalities. The use of the third person may create an impression that the story is happening now, while the reader reads it. The first person tends to push the story farther away, as it becomes something which has already happened to the narrator in the past, about which he now tells you.

Sometimes an author can induce belief by allowing a minor character to tell the story. He may not actually take part in the drama, but he has seen it happen; he gives you his word that it is true. In that terrible story of Bertran and Bimi, Kipling gives the narrative over to Hans, a seasoned wanderer of the earth, who has seen many things happen, but who will now tell you something which he says you cannot believe, thus disarming your distrust in the beginning. Hans unrolls

his ghastly tragedy in his everyday German dialect, just as he saw it happen. And you never forget its horror. You have watched it with him.

In this case Hans tells the story to the author in the first person. The minor-character narrator in the third person proves himself useful sometimes as a means of telling a story which covers a good deal of time. He knew the characters in their youth and can tell you of the situation then. Later he comes across them again and observes what has happened to them. Still later he drops in upon them at tea and there he is able to pull together the loose ends of his observations and round up the drama, which is now finished one way or another. The succeeding steps of a mystery story are often developed as they become clear to the minor character, who knows no more about them than the reader. The reader passes through the same stages of bewilderment and gradual enlightenment that the narrator experiences and thus becomes convinced that such a mystery would be solved in this particular way.

EXERCISE

Read the stories in any good collection or standard magazine. Try to determine the basis for the author's choice of an angle from which to present the story. Try to plan the story from at least one different angle. What happens to the story? Be prepared to report your findings to the class.

PLANNING THE STORY IN DETAIL

After you have decided what the events of your story are, who your characters are, and perhaps what

angle you can best use in telling the story, you have the problem of the final detailed planning and writing of this story. Just how much are you going to set down on paper and how are you going to handle it? Sometimes a good plot is ruined because the writer does not select the proper scenes to present, because his dialog is stiff and unreal, because the proportions of the story are bad.

Ask yourself why a play which you witness is more moving, more vivid to you than a recital of the story of the play. Ask yourself why an accident which you see yourself moves you more than the newspaper account of the same accident. The answer will contain valuable hints about story handling. In the accident you respond to definite sense impressions. At the play you see, lifesize, certain moments which the author has chosen. Dialog and gesture, setting, and the behavior of the actors give you the story as you would watch it in real life. The story writer has the opportunity to use this same direct method of presenting his story. Realizing that the reader wishes to see his characters, to believe in their affairs, he may copy the method of life and give certain parts of his story in lifesize, with dialog accompanied by stage business of setting and action. Often in the early stages of story writing, the author fails to see his story in scenes; he tells about the action instead of presenting it directly, and thus neglects one means to attain reality and vividness. It is not enough to tell about your story. You must make it move and live under the reader's eyes.

The first thing which you realize when you examine your story is, of course, that it is impossible to give

all of it in this dramatic form. You must select for scenes the moments which are the most revealing, the most interesting, and the most comprehensive. You decide how long a time this story covers—a day, an hour, or years of a person's life. A story which could be turned into a one-act play, for example, is a story of an hour or so. The forces that produce the drama reach back of that hour, but they can be suggested in the dialog. Susan Glaspell's story, "A Jury of Her Peers," which made the play *Trifles*, is a good illustration of this kind of brief dramatic form. It is excellent training in compression and dramatic effect to attempt a story in which you have no interval of time. Ernest Hemingway often uses this form, as in "The Killers."

Not many plots, however, have the kind of drama which can be given only in the final stages of development. The problem, then, is to select the moments which merit lifesize treatment in scenes, and to link those scenes by paragraphs as interesting as you can make them in which you telescope what has happened during a week or a year or longer, leading your reader ahead into the next scene. Sometimes if you will stand at the end of your story and look back to its beginning, you will be able to decide which moments to select for scenes. If you stand at the beginning, especially if you begin to write without planning, you may have a good scene for the start, and no room finally for important action later in the story.

Percy Lubbock, in his book *The Craft of Fiction*, makes the statement that fiction consists of preparation for a scene, and the presenting of the scene. In the

preparation the writer sums up events, offers explanations about the characters, and in general talks about the story. In the scene itself he presents important moments directly to the reader. There is an immediacy and vividness about this dramatic handling which general narrative seldom achieves. A reader recognizes the value of scenes, although he may not analyze his feelings in those terms. He says he likes plenty of dialog. He may thumb through a magazine or a book until he finds pages which have the broken effect of dialog before he selects the story he wishes to read. Behind this choice lies his experience in reading. Stories with scenes have more reality. After all, human affairs are carried on in real encounters among people, and the scene with its dialog and stage business is an indication of such encounters.

Edna Ferber's story, "The Gay Old Dog," is an excellent illustration of the way in which a skillful author solves this problem of the proportion of scenes to indirect narrative in a story covering a long period of time. Far too many years of Jo's life must be given to permit much expansion into the dramatic form. And yet the author wishes to give the reader direct contact with Jo. Notice the way in which the summary of passing years is frequently broken for a moment of significant dialog. You hear Jo's mother tell him to take care of the girls, his sisters. You hear his pitiful surrender of Emily. These fragments from actual scenes give life to the running account of Jo's sacrifices, of the gradual disappearance of his burden as his sisters, one by one, find occupations or husbands, of Jo's sudden wealth, of his attempts to fill his empty life with

pleasures. Note that when the important moments of the story arrive, they arrive in full scenes. You share Jo's meeting with Emily, and his outburst against his sisters.

Such a story as Stevenson's "Markheim," which gives the conflict between good and evil in a man's character, might seem difficult to dramatize. And yet Stevenson has recognized the value of direct handling to such an extent that he gives Markheim's conscience a voice, lays the story in one setting, the shop of the curio dealer, and gives you the whole affair in a definite scene.

Notice, as you read fiction, whether novels or short stories, the proportion of indirect narration to scenes, and the kind of response you make to each method of handling the story. Explanation, reminiscence, description, analysis of feeling, all have their part in the story. But their part is usually to prepare for the direct scene, in which the reader may watch the characters, share their experiences and feelings, and have the keen enjoyment of immediate encounter with the affairs of the story. As we have said, not all of the story can or should be dramatized except in rare cases. In planning your own stories, you will discover that there are three functions which any scene serves, and the scene which does all three things well is the best to develop. The scene should carry forward the action; it should characterize the people involved, through their speech, feelings, behavior; it should have emotional interest.

EXERCISE

Select one of the plot outlines which you have already made. Work out a scenario of a story stating which moments you intend to develop in scenes. Give the location of the scene, the characters present, the action which takes place, the time relation to the other scenes. Often a novice in the art starts off bravely, developing the first part of his story in great detail. Then he discovers that the story is growing too long, and he summarizes important parts of the action, not because they are less interesting, but because he lacks a clear plan, which would permit him to work out events in proper proportion. You will find that usually you wish a good scene for the crisis of the story, for the point where the solution is reached. You will learn that scenes vary in length, and that often the important scenes are not long, that they gain their intensity by the brief, sharp way in which they show the result of earlier action. Such a scenario will mean that you will not run down before you reach the end of your story, and that you will not, through lack of foresight, crowd the end into a page.

USE OF DESCRIPTION

Description in narrative writing includes all the kinds of description which we have been discussing. When you tell a story, you find yourself under the necessity of dealing with objects, places, people, and events. But your problem has become complicated by the fact that you are now handling a plot. Your emphasis has been shifted. The description must be subordinated to the story, which concerns itself with the emotions and dramatic action of human beings. It becomes incidental and is woven through the story to make complete your understanding of the characters.

Modern writing demands that description shall be treated in fiction much as it is treated in real life, not as a separate ingredient, but as a breath of life blown through it. You read a story because you are interested in the way life works. You demand, therefore, an illusion of life in the story. You do not wish to be side-tracked from your interest in the characters and their actions by descriptions of material which in real life resolves itself into a vivid background for the drama.

Your sharpest impressions are always associated with terrific emotional or physical stress. Why not use your recognition of that fact in your writing? Remember how gray and black the sky and the trees and the sidewalk looked as you went running, running, running, trying to get home before death got there. And the startled face of the woman you ran past. Remember how college looked that first day when you were trying to register and were too confused and excited to be sure of the date of your birth. Yet you had to elbow your way through the crowd, and hold your own with it, while you felt and saw its details with unforgettable clarity. You do not know now the data about the courses for which you signed, but you remember how the place looked and smelled, and the kind of voice the young fellow ahead of you had when he swore.

Description separated in unrelated blocks from the action of a story, which is supposed to be a cross section of life, becomes then an artificial thing. Yet in some way we must convey vivid impressions of the character and the outer world in which he moves. We are entirely inadequate as imitators of life unless we

can supply this element to our drama. It is our business to find some natural way to convey such impressions.

When it comes to fiction, the writer has to identify himself temporarily with the character which he is creating. That character's awareness of certain details helps to determine your selection of them so that the description moves on smoothly as a part of him and his life.

Suppose that you write a story about a man whose life is concerned entirely with affairs on a physical basis. Without any veneer of culture or education, or any of the pattern acquired during the process of getting these aids to civilization, he is interested in getting enough food and clothes to make himself and his family as comfortable as possible. His capacities for enjoyment are limited to a few satisfactions of the more primitive needs. Such was the equipment of the collier in D. H. Lawrence's "Sick Collier."

Suppose in this story that you devote several paragraphs to a description of Scargill Street, where he and his bride chose to live. No doubt if you had been there, you would have seen much of interest and quaint color in this mining town. Would the collier see these things? In the latter part of the story, when the collier is hurt and has to sit all day looking out of the window, Lawrence wishes us to know that the house was on the side of a steep hill overlooking the narrow tunnel-like street. Those were details of which the collier was aware. Lawrence wishes us to know the kind of enjoyment that such a man would take in his home. He gives you a brief picture of the man enjoying himself. He felt a tremendous pride in his wife and was com-

pletely satisfied to sit at home with her evenings while she read the newspaper to him. Or he would go outside and squat on his heels against the side of his house while he exchanged greetings with passers-by. Even if no one came along, he would just squat and smoke, wholly contented. Lawrence reveals him in his simplicity and the fullness of his active force.

When a writer like Galsworthy gives you in beautiful detail the English countryside against which his characters move, we feel that his descriptions are perfectly integrated with the life of his people. The countryside is a part of themselves; they move through it, aware of its blossoming apple trees, its summer moons. In the same way Conrad makes the sea permeate the character of his people, influence them, rule them. It is the most important thing in their lives; it, therefore, justifies his descriptions of it. It is essential to the action and emotional reaction of the characters; it helps make the drama.

If fiction is to have reality—and without reality it is as nothing—then it must copy the method of life. If the details necessary to the reader's understanding of the situation in the story come to him as they come to the character while he is experiencing that situation, then they follow the method of life, and the story becomes vivid and alive. The writer, moreover, is a long way further toward that identification with his character which forces him to see things and feel things only as that character would experience them. When he becomes the sick collier, he sees and feels with the man as he goes through his unhappy days. When he becomes the sensitive, high-strung English

boy, Jon, in Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*, he sees life in different terms. He realizes the sense of beauty which is the boy's natural inheritance. Not only is the quality of his description affected, but the quantity of it and the places in the story where it would occur.

This form of description may seem more or less casual to the eye of the reader, who rarely stops to analyze how he gets that sense of reality which makes him appreciate the story. A student made the statement that she had a complete picture of Reginald Peacock's home, but when she went to look it up in the story she discovered that it existed only in her own mind; that Katherine Mansfield had delivered over to her the materials by which she was able to construct that home; and that she had constructed it so perfectly that it existed as clearly as her own. Significant phrasing and adroit detail had suggested reality of experience in seeing and knowing the place.

This kind of art instead of being casual is the sort which demands the utmost skill. To seize upon the one detail which would sharpen the situation unbearably in real life demands of the writer a knowledge of how experience is gained and a power to select the details which suggest that experience. He realizes that if he wishes to give an experience to the reader by means of the printed page, he must imitate the subtle and difficult way of life.

Go over several contemporary stories, such as Steele's "What Do You Mean, Americans?" Milburn's "A Student in Economics," Brush's "Night Club," and underline the descriptive phrases. Notice how often the author suggests appearance by one detail, how often

he strikes off the setting in a sentence or so. Notice how seldom the contemporary author indulges in a long passage of description. Notice, in short, how the description is woven into the fabric of the story itself.

EXERCISE

Write a brief paper discussing the use of description of character and setting in any one of the stories you have read.

DIALOG

Since dialog is an important element in the dramatic parts of your story, it may be well to return to the comments made in the chapter on the character sketch. You will remember that value of voice, of idiom, of vocabulary in the picture of a person was emphasized. You know that you have not written dialog merely because you have placed quotation marks about a group of words. It may be well to reread the pages concerning naturalness of dialog, since that quality is necessary in your story scenes.

In the short story, however, naturalness is only one of the problems concerned with dialog. What the character says in a story cannot be decided merely on the grounds of character revelation. His remarks must belong in the story. They may explain past affairs, or reveal motives, or make decisions; always they should be plausible under the story circumstances, and usually they should carry the story forward. As in the character sketch, the dialog should reveal character. That is, although the form of the dialog gives it naturalness, the content must belong to the person speaking. The choice of words, the indication of feeling which

accompanies the speech, the actual thing said, must all be consistent with the person you are drawing.

Read Ernest Hemingway's short stories for pungent talk with flavor of real characters. For skill in the use of idiom to give flavor to speech, read any of Synge's Irish plays: notice the way in which with no phonetic distortion he suggests the tones and qualities of the Irish people. Ring Lardner catches true colloquial quality; his characters speak with the rhythm and phrasing used by their prototypes in America. Wilbur Daniel Steele has an excellent ear for the tones of human speech, and furthermore with a high degree of craftsmanship can make his dialog carry the story action and with great economy suggest the emotions of his characters.

In working for naturalness in dialog it often is necessary to suggest rather than to imitate actual speech. A phonographic record, giving with phonetic accuracy all the faults of pronunciation, grammar, style of colloquial speech, becomes too difficult to read, and gives an effect of exaggeration rather than of truth. Things in print seem more emphatic than they seem to the ear. The writer learns to work for flavor rather than complete fidelity, and he finds that flavor in choice of words, in idiom, in arrangement of words in sentences.

EXERCISES

Try a series of brief scenes in which two or more people handle an emotional situation:

A mother tries to persuade her son not to leave college for a job in Mexico. She objects to the girl in whom her son is interested.

A girl breaks her engagement with a young man.

A woman suspects a maid of stealing a necklace.

Two people become reconciled after a serious quarrel.

As you write the dialog, notice that adverbs are weak as a method of showing feeling: "Said tearfully, laughingly, pettishly," can be given better in specific verbs. Try to make the content of the speech significant enough to give character; use details of action and setting with the conversation as an aid in visualization of the scene. Try one of the dialogs from the objective angle; that is, set down only what you would see and hear if you were an observer. Do not give any interpretation of the feeling or thought of the characters, except as the speeches, gestures, facial expressions reveal thought and feeling. Can you suggest emotion and personality effectively this way? Then try a dialog from the angle of one of the characters, using his thoughts or feelings along with speech and stage business. Does this method intensify the scene? You will discover that the first method has more swiftness and perhaps more drama, while the second may give more interpretation of personality or mood.

SUMMARY

What, then, are the various steps you take in preparing to write a story? First you find your story, this small piece of human drama, tragic, comic, pathetic, which you wish to present. Your own starting point may be a character, a situation, a theme. If you start from a character, you search for a situation which will

reveal him. If you begin with a situation, you invent proper characters and find the theme for the story. If you have a theme or idea as the original starting point, you hunt for characters and drama which will prove the theme. You realize that a good story needs a situation which moves through conflict to a solution.

You work out the characters for your story, their appearance, their important character traits, their speech, their motives for action. Frequently an author knows much more about his chief characters than he sets down in a story, but out of his complete realization of them comes the consistency of feeling and conduct which gives the reader a sense of reality.

Then you may decide whose story this is, and what angle you can best use in telling. You know that you wish to make the reader believe in the story and share the events and feelings; you wish to give him first-hand encounter with the characters and their affairs. For this reason you select certain moments in the progress of the story for life-sized development in scenes, working out a clear scenario to help in the question of proportion, of amount of space you can allow various scenes.

All of these matters concern your planning of the story before you reach the point of actual writing. By this time you have an outline, and perhaps some pages of notes in which you have talked to yourself about the characters, the place, the theme, the effect you wish to produce. You are now ready to write the story.

WRITING THE STORY

The writing of your story involves problems of style. In the discussion of dialog you met some of those problems in the relation of sentence structure and vocabulary to the effect of naturalness and truth. The parts of your story which lie within quotation marks should take their style from the characters who are speaking.

Much of your story, however, is not dialog, and in your descriptive passages, your transitions, your paragraphs which sum up a day or a week in the passing of events, your comments on the emotions of your characters, style is a constant problem. Review what you have learned in the chapters on Words, Sentences, and Description; once more take warning against the jarring word, the outworn phrase, and strive toward smooth and vital expression.

Some writers make the first draft of the story quickly, without too much concern about each word and phrase. Then they revise carefully. Some writers, like Sentimental Tommy, work all day for the right word. You must find your own method. But in fiction as in any other kind of writing your best route to good style is the highway of sincerity, and a desire to communicate to the reader something which you know and feel about certain human beings.

MODEL STORY

A STUDENT IN ECONOMICS *

by George Milburn

All of the boys on the third floor of Mrs. Gooch's approved rooms for men had been posted to get Charlie Wingate up that afternoon. He had to go to see the Dean. Two or three of them forgot all about it and two or three of them had other things to do, but Eddie Barbour liked waking people up. Eddie stuck his weasel face in at Charlie's door just as the alarm clock was giving one last feeble tap. The clock stood on the bottom of a tin washpan that was set upside-down on a wooden chair beside the bed. The alarm had made a terrific din. Eddie had heard it far down the hall. The hands showed two o'clock. Pale needles from a December sun were piercing the limp green window shade in a hundred places.

Eddie Barbour yelled, "Aw right, Charlie! Snap out of it!" He came into the chilly room and stood for a moment staring vaguely at the ridge of quilts on the sagged iron bed. The only sound was the long, regular sough of Charlie Wingate's breathing. He hadn't heard a thing. Eddie made a sudden grab for the top of the covers, stripped them back and began jouncing the sleeper by the shoulders. Charlie grunted every time the bed springs creaked, but he nuzzled his pillow and went on sleeping. Eddie went over to the study table, where a large, white-enamelled water pitcher stood, and he came back to the bed with the water, breathing giggles. He tipped the water pitcher a little and a few drops fell on the back of Charlie's neck without waking him. Eddie sloshed the icy water up over the pitcher's mouth. A whole cupful splashed on Charlie's head. Charlie sat up quickly, batting his arms about, and Eddie Barbour whinnied with laughter.

* From *No More Trumpets*, by George Milburn. Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1934. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace & Company.

"Arise, my lord, for the day is here," he said, going across and ceremoniously raising the crooked window shade. Charlie sat straight up among the rumpled quilts with his head cocked on one side, staring dully. He had slept with his clothes on. He sat up in bed all dressed, in a soldier's brown uniform, all but his shoes and roll puttees.

"You got army to-day?" Eddie asked, putting the pitcher down.

Charlie looked at him for a moment and blinked. Then he said in a voice stuffy with sleep, "Naw. I had army yesterday. I got army make-up to-day." He worked his mouth, making clopping noises.

"What time you got army make-up, Charlie? When you come in from class you said get you up because you had to go see the Dean at two-thirty."

"Yeah, I do have to go see the Dean at two-thirty. But I got army make-up too. I got to make up drill cuts from three till six." All at once he flopped back down on the bed, sound asleep again.

"Hey!" Eddie cried, jumping forward. "Come out of that! Wake up there, Charlie! You can't sleep no more if you got to see the Dean at two-thirty. You just about got time to make it." He jerked him back up in bed.

"Damn the Dean," Charlie said. "Two hours' sleep ain't enough."

"Is two hours all the sleep you got last night?"

"Where you get the 'last night'? I worked all night last night. I had classes till noon yesterday. Two hours' sleep was all I got to-day. And darn little more yesterday or the day before. When is Sunday? Sunday's the first day I'm due to get any real sleep. Two hours' sleep is not enough sleep for a man to get."

He plumped his stockinged feet onto the cold floor and got up stiffly. He went over to the washstand, where he picked up his tooth brush and tooth paste and a bar of soap and slowly took his face towel down from beside the warped looking-glass. He came back to where his shoes lay and stood looking at the toilet articles in his hands as if he had

forgotten what he meant to do with them. He dumped them on the bed, took the pan with the alarm clock on it and set it on the floor. Then he sat down on the chair and picked up one of the heavy army shoes, held it and felt it and studied it carefully before he put it on. He put on the other shoe with equal deliberation and stood up without lacing either of them. He took his things up from the bed and started off for the bathroom, his loose shoes clogging. Eddie Barbour followed him down the drafty hall.

The creosote disinfectant that Mrs. Gooch used in her bathrooms gave off a strong odor. "Dag gum bathroom smells just like a hen coop," Charlie said thickly as he stood in front of the white-specked mirror twisting his face. He wouldn't need a shave for another day. He had a fairly good-looking face, tan and thin, with ringlets of black hair tumbling down over his forehead. His large ears stuck straight out. He looked at his image with dark eyes made narrow by two purplish puffs under them, and he yawned widely.

Eddie Barbour stood leaning against the jamb of the bathroom door. He said, "You ought to try and get more sleep, Charlie."

"Are you telling *me*?" Charlie said, running water in the face bowl. Eddie Barbour was a freshman too.

Charlie Wingate came walking along University Boulevard toward the campus, hunched up in his army overcoat. The raw December wind whipped his face and made him feel wide awake. He passed a bunch of fraternity men pitching horseshoes in the drive beside the K.A. house. Two or three, sprucely dressed, gave him impersonal glances as he passed. They did not speak, and he walked past self-consciously, seeing them without looking toward them.

When he reached the business section opposite the campus he turned in at the white-tiled front of The Wigwam. The noon rush was over and Nick was not at the cash register. A few noon "dates" were still sitting in the booths along the wall. Charlie walked straight back along the white-tile counter and sat down on the end stool. Red Hibbert was

standing by the coffee urns reading the sports section. When Charlie sat down Red folded his newspaper slowly and came over to wait on him. Charlie sat with his cheeks resting on the heels of his hands.

"How's it, Chollie, old boy, old boy?" Red Hibbert said.

"Not bad. Give me a cup of javy without and a couple of them Grandma's oatmeal cookies over there, Red. Where's Nick?"

Red scooted the plate with the cookies on it down the glassy white counter top and came along with the cup of black coffee. "This is Nick's day for Kiwanis," he said. "It looks to me like you'd stay home and get some sleep once in a while. You're dyin' on your feet."

"I am going to get some sleep Sunday, don't you never worry. I have to go see the Dean this afternoon. And I got make-up drill at three o'clock. I've got to make up some drill cuts."

"What you got to go see the Dean about?"

"I don't know what about; here's all it said." Charlie reached in his overcoat pocket and pulled out a jagged window envelope and a mimeographed postal card. He pushed the envelope across the counter along with the postal card. "I got that other in the morning mail too."

Red took the printed form from the Dean of Men's office out of the envelope and glanced at it. Then he picked up the postal card. It was headed,

FOURTH AND FINAL NOTICE

You are hereby summoned to appear before the chairman of the Student Senate Committee on Freshman Activities, Rm 204 Student Union Bldg., not later than 4 P.M., Friday afternoon. It will be to your advantage not to ignore this summons as you have three previous ones. This is positively the last opportunity you will be given to rectify your delinquency. Should you fail to appear this time, steps will be taken to bring you.

(Signed) J. AUBERY CARSON, Chrmn
Com on Frshmn Actvts.

Red waggled the postal card. "What you going to do about this?"

"Tear it up like I did the others, I guess. I know what they want. They want to try and make me buy one of them damn' freshman caps."

"Take a tip from me, Charlie: I'd go see them. It won't hurt nothing, and it might be a lot easier on you in the long run."

"Hell, what can they do?"

"Plenty. They could sick the D.D.M.C.'s onto you."

"Ah! The D.D.M.C.'s, that bunch of amateur ku kluckers!"

"Call 'em amateurs if you want to, Charlie, but it wasn't only but last Friday night they took that little Jew-boy, Sol Lewis, out of the rooming house where I stay. It look to me like they did a pretty professional job on him. They used the buckle-end of a belt on him. They claim he was a stool pigeon for the University."

"Stool pigeon! Ah, you know that guy wasn't a stool pigeon, Red."

"We-ell, I'm not saying one way or the other. Anyhow, that's what you're up against when you take to fooling with that Student Committee on Freshman Activities, Charlie."

"Prexy claimed in his opening address at the first of school that he had put a stop to these masked frats and all this hazing."

"Yeah, he said he had; but how's he going to put a stop to the D.D.M.C.'s? He can't kick out all the biggest shots in the University, can he? All the big shots on the campus are D.D.M.C.'s. Football stars and fellas like that. You won't see the President kicking guys like that out of the University."

"Maybe not, but—why, hell, that freshman cap business is nothing but a racket. That's all it is. Damn' if I let 'em scare me into paying a dollar for a little old sleazy green cloth cap!"

"O.K., Charlie; I guess you know what you want to do."

"Anyway, how could I get around to see that committee before four o'clock this afternoon, and see the Dean at two-thirty, and go to make-up drill from three till six? I'll be late to drill and get bawled out by the captain again. The captain's already about to flunk me for cuts. That's what's getting me down—Military. It's this Military that's getting me down."

"Jees, I don't know, Charlie; seems like I get a bigger kick out of army than I do any other course I got. They sure learn you more in army than they do in anything else *in this University*."

"Yeow, you learn plenty in army, all right. But what I don't like is the compulsory part. I don't think they ought to be allowed to make it compulsory for freshman and sophomores. That's just like they had it over in Germany before they got rid of the Kaiser."

The red-haired boy gave him a startled look. He frowned heavily. "Charlie," he exclaimed, "where are you getting all these radical ideas you been spouting around here lately?" Charlie peered at him. Red's face was set in earnestness.

"Why, that's not a radical idea," Charlie said, pushing back his empty coffee cup. "That's just a plain historical fact, that's all that is. I don't see where they got any right to make Military Training compulsory. This is supposed to be a *free* country. That compulsory stuff is what Mussle-leany and birds like that pull."

"But, Charlie, it's all for your own benefit. The University is just looking out after your own interests."

"How do you figure they're looking out for *my* interests?"

"Well, for one thing, when the next war comes we'll all be officers, us fellas that got this training in college. We'll go right into the regular army as officers. There's where we'll have the edge on guys that never did take advantage of a college education. Person'ly, when the next war comes along, I'm not hankerin' after any front-line trenches. And you know darn' well they're not going to stick their college-trained officer into front-line trenches to get shot. So there's

where I figure us guys in R.O.T.C. will have a big advantage."

"Yeah, you might be right, at that, Red. But I'm not kicking about R.O.T.C. It's just the compulsory part I'm kicking against."

Red perked his head and scowled impatiently. "Charlie, they *got* to make it compulsory. If it wasn't compulsory, how many of the fellas would enroll in it? They have to make Military compulsory in order to give the fullest benefits. What good could they do if only a few of the fellas was taking it?"

"Anyway, I know some it's not compulsory for," Charlie said stubbornly. "Last night there was a Phi Gam pledge in here bragging about how he got out of Military. He told them at the first of school he didn't want to take Military. They told him he *had* to take it—required of all able-bodied freshmen. Couldn't get his degree without it. So he had to go buy him army shoes. Well, he got the shoe store to send the bill to his old man. His old man is one of these they call 'em pacifists. When his old man gets the bill for his kid's army shoes, maybe you think he don't get the President of this University on long distance and tell him where to head in at. And this kid didn't have to take Military, neither. His old man's a big shot lawyer in the City."

"Yeah, but you got to have pull to get away with that, Charlie."

"That's what I mean, Red. You can get away with plenty in this University if you got the pull."

Charlie Wingate loped up the steps of the Administration Building, hurried through the revolving doors, and walked past hissing steam radiators down the long hall to the Dean of Men's office. He was ten minutes late. Before he opened the frosted-glass door he took out a pair of amber-colored spectacles and put them on. Then he went in and handed his summons to the secretary.

"The Dean will see you in a moment," she said. "Please take a chair."

Charlie sat down and gave an amber-hued glance about the outer office. Three dejected freshmen, holding their green caps, were waiting with him. He recognized none of them, so he picked up a week-old copy of the *Christian Science Monitor* and started to read it. But the room was warm and he immediately went to sleep. He had his head propped back against the wall. The newspaper slipped down into his lap. His amber-colored glasses hid his eyes and no one could see that they were closed. He was awakened by the secretary shaking him. She was smiling and the freshmen were all snickering.

"Wake up and pay for your bed, fella!" one of the freshmen called, and every one laughed heartily.

"I sort of drowsed off. It's so nice and warm in here," Charlie said, apologizing to the pretty secretary.

The Dean of Men got up as he entered and, with his eyes on the slip bearing Charlie's name, said, "Ah, this is Charles Wingate, isn't it?" He grasped Charlie's hand as if it were an honor and pressed a button under the edge of his desk with his other hand. The secretary appeared at the door. "Miss Dunn, will you bring in Wingate's folder—Charles W-i-n-g-a-t-e. How do you like college by now, Wingate? Eyes troubling you?"

"Pretty well, sir. Yes, sir, a little. I wear these glasses."

The secretary came back with the folder and the Dean looked through it briefly. "Well, Wingate, I suppose you're anxious to know why I sent for you. The unpleasant truth is, Wingate, you don't seem to be doing so well in your college work. Your freshman adviser conferred with you twice about this, and this week he turned your case over to me. My purpose, of course, is to help you. Now, to be quite frank, Wingate, you're on the verge of flunking out. Less than a third of the semester remains, and you have a failing grade in English 101, conditional grades in Psychology 51 and Military Training; three hours of F and four hours of D, almost half your total number of hours. On the other hand, you have an A average in Spanish 1 and a B in

Economics 150. Wingate, how do you account for your failing English when you are an A student in Spanish?"

"To tell you the truth, sir, I got behind on my written work in English, and I've never been able to catch up. And I don't really have to study Spanish. My father is a railway section foreman in my home town, and he's always had a gang of Mexicans working for him. I've been speaking Mexican ever since I was a kid. It's not the pure, what they call Castilian, Spanish, but I probably know almost as much Spanish as my professor."

"How about this B in Economics? That's a fairly high grade."

"Yes, sir. Doctor Kenshaw—he's my Ec professor—doesn't give exams. Instead he gives every one a B until he calls for our term papers. We don't recite in his class. We just listen to him lecture. And the grade you get on your term paper is your semester grade."

"Ah! What you students term a pipe course, eh, Wingate?"

"Not exactly, sir. We have to do a lot of outside reading for the term paper. But I'm counting on keeping that B in Ec."

"That's fine, Wingate. But it appears to me that it's high time you were getting busy on some of these other grades, too. Why can't you dig in and pull these D's up to B's, and this F up to at least a C? You've got it in you. You made an unusually high grade on your entrance exams, your record shows. Graduated from high school with honors. What's the trouble, Wingate? Tell me!"

"I don't know, sir, except I work at night and—"

"Oh, I see it here on your enrollment card now. Where do you work?"

"I work nights for Nick Pappas, down at The Wigwam."

"How many hours a night do you work?"

"Ten hours, sir. From nine till seven. The Wigwam stays open all night. I eat and go to eight o'clock class when I get off."

"Very interesting, Wingate. But don't you suppose that it would be advisable to cut down a bit on this outside work and attend a little more closely to your college work? After all, that's what you're here for, primarily—to go to college, not work in a café."

"I couldn't work fewer hours and stay in school, sir. I just barely get by as it is. I get my board at The Wigwam, and I pay my room rent, and I've been paying out on a suit of clothes. That leaves only about a dollar a week for all the other things I have to have."

"Wingate, shouldn't you earn more than that, working ten hours?"

"I get the regular, first-year-man rate, sir. Twenty-five cents an hour. It's set by the University. Nick takes out for board."

"Can't you arrange for a little financial support from home?"

"No, sir, I'm afraid I couldn't. I have two brothers and two sisters at home younger than I am. It wouldn't be right for me to ask my father to send money out of what he makes."

"But surely you could get out and land something a little more lucrative than this all-night restaurant job, Wingate."

"No, sir. Twenty-five cents is the standard rate for working students, and I haven't found anything better. Nick says he has at least twenty men on the waiting list for this job I have."

"Well, there's this about it, Wingate. The University is here, supported by the taxpayers of this State, for the purpose of giving the young men and women of this State educational opportunities. The University is not here for the purpose of training young men to be waiters in all-night restaurants. And, so far as I can see, that's about all you are deriving from your University career. So it occurs to me that you should make a choice: either find some way to devote more attention to your college work or drop out of school altogether. We are very loath to encourage students

who are *entirely self-supporting*. And yet, I will admit that I know any number of first-rate students who are entirely self-supporting. There's Aubery Carson, for example. Quarterback on the football team, delegate to the Olympics, president of the Student Senate, and he's a straight A student. Aubery Carson was telling me only last week that he hasn't had any financial assistance from home since he enrolled as a freshman. Aubery is a fine example of the working student."

"Yes, sir; but look at the job Carson has. He works for a big tobacco company, and all he has to do is hand out Treasure Trove cigarettes to other students. The tobacco company pays him a good salary for passing out samples of their cigarettes."

"Why, Wingate, you surely must be mistaken about that. I don't believe Aubery Carson smokes. In fact, I know he doesn't smoke. He's one of the finest all-round athletes in this country."

"No, sir; I don't say he smokes either. But that's the straight stuff about his job with the cigarette company. They figure it's a good advertisement to have a popular guy like Aubery Carson passing out Treasure Trove. Sort of an endorsement."

"All the same, Wingate, it doesn't reflect a very good attitude on your part, criticizing the way one of your fellow students earns his college expenses."

"Oh, I didn't mean to criticize him, sir. I was only saying—"

"Yes, yes, I know; but all this is beside the point. We're here to discuss the state of your grades, Wingate. The fact is, you are on probation right now. As you must know, any student who is passing in less than half his work is automatically suspended from the University and must return to his home. Now one F more and out you'll go, Wingate. That's just being frank with you."

"I'd hate to have to go back home like that, sir."

"Well, you'd have to. If you flunk out, the University

authorities are obliged to see that you return to your home immediately."

"I'd hate that, sir. I'd hate to go back home and have to live off my family, and that's probably what I'd have to do. I had a letter from mother yesterday, and she says that nearly all the boys who graduated from high school with me are still there, loafing on the streets and living off their old folks. I don't like that idea. Mother's proud of me because I'm working my way through college. You know there are not many jobs to be had nowadays, sir, and I'd hate to have to go back home and loaf."

"It is a problem, I'll confess, Wingate. But what's the point in your coming to the University and working all night in a café and then flunking your class work? Moreover, your freshman adviser reports that you make a practice of sleeping in class. Is that true?"

"Well, yes, sir. I suppose I do drop off sometimes."

"Pretty impossible situation, isn't it, Wingate? Well, I've given you the best advice I can. Unless you can alter your circumstances I suggest that you withdraw from the University at once. We have six thousand other students here who need our attention, and the University has to be impartial and impersonal in dealing with these problems. Unless you can find some means to avoid flunking out I suggest withdrawing beforehand."

"Withdrawal would be a disgrace to me, sir. If I withdrew and went back home now, every one at home would say that I had been expelled. You know how small towns are."

"Ah, now, Wingate, when you begin dealing with small-town gossip, I fear you're really getting outside my province. But I should think you'd prefer honorable withdrawal to flunking out."

"I believe I'll try to stick it through, sir. I'll try to remove the conditional grades, and maybe I can luck through on my finals."

"I hope you can, Wingate. As long as you feel that way about it, good luck to you." The Dean of Men stood up.

Charlie stood up too. The Dean put out his hand and showed his teeth in a jovial smile and bore down hard on Charlie's knuckles. "I'm counting on you strong, old man," he said, encircling Charlie's shoulders with his left arm. "I know you have the stuff and that you'll come through with flying colors one of these days."

"Thank you, sir," Charlie said, grinning tearfully while the Dean gave his shoulder little pats. He edged toward the door as soon as the Dean released him, but when he reached it he hesitated and pulled the postal card out of his pocket. "Oh, pardon me, sir, but there's something I forgot to ask you. I got this in the mail to-day. I've been a little bothered about what to do about it."

The Dean of Men took the mimeographed card and read it quickly. "Why, I should say that you ought to go see what they want, Wingate. You shouldn't ignore things of this sort, you know. It's all a part of the normal activities of college life. No reason for antagonizing your fellow-students by ignoring a request of this kind."

"All right, sir; I'll go see them."

"Why, to be sure, go see them! Always keep in mind that the University is a social as well as an educational institution, Wingate."

Room 204, Student Union Building, was a newly finished, rather barren office that smelled dankly of lime in the fresh plaster. It was fitted with a metal desk painted to imitate painted walnut, a large brass spittoon, a square metal waste-paper basket, a green metal filing cabinet, a large bank calendar, a huge pasteboard shipping case, and J. Aubery Carson, who had the freshman cap concession.

Charlie Wingate hesitantly opened the door and saw J. Aubery Carson tilted back in a chair, his feet on the metal walnut desk, reading a copy of *Ballyhoo*.

"Co-ome in! Co-ome in!" J. Aubery Carson called loudly without putting down his magazine. "All right, old timer. What's on your mind?"

Charlie held out the mimeographed card. Carson held his

magazine a moment longer before accepting the card. He shoved his hat down over one eye, turning the card, looking first at the back, then at the name on the front. "Um-m-m," he grunted. He reached over to a drawer in the filing cabinet without taking his feet down and flipped through the cards. He looked at the name on the postal card again, pulled a card out of the file, and drew his thick lips up into a rosette. He looked at the file card in silence.

"Wingate," he said at last in a severe tone, "you have been dilatory. Indeed, Wingate, I might even go so far as to say you have been remiss. At the beginning of this semester you applied for and received a refund on your student ticket fee. That signifies that you have not attended a single football game this season, and that you have no intention of honoring any of the University's athletic spectacles with your presence this season. Also, the record discloses that you did not register at the Y.M.C.A. freshman mixer, neither did you respond to polite solicitation for a trifling monetary pledge to the Memorial Stadium Fund. And, most heinous offense of all, Wingate, we find that you have yet to pay in one dollar for your freshman cap, prescribed by your seniors and purveyed to you on a non-profit basis by the Student Committee on Freshman Activities. And yet, Wingate, I find you duly enrolled and attending classes in this here now University. Wingate, what possible excuse do you have for such gross neglect of University tradition? Speak up!"

Charlie said meekly, "Well, I work nights and it's hard for me to get here in the daytime, and I can't afford to buy a cap."

"What's this!" Carson exclaimed, jerking his legs down from the desk top and banging the desk with two flat hands. "Why, boy, this is treason! You mean you can't afford *not* to buy a freshman cap."

"No, I just came to tell you that a dollar has to go a long way with me and that I need every cent I earn to stay in school. So I wish you'd please excuse me from buying a freshman cap."

Carson's lean, florid face suddenly became rigid and he stuck his jaw out with his lower teeth showing and, in spite of his marcelled taffy pompadour and his creased tailored suit, he again looked very much as he did in all the sporting section photographs. "See here, Wingate," he said, hard-lipped, "you're still a freshman at this University. You'll have to wait another year before you can start saying what you will do and won't do, see? Now we've been patient with you. You've been in school here three months without putting on a freshman cap. Do you realize that over eighty-five per cent of the freshman class came in here and bought their caps before the first week of school ended? Now who do you think *you* are, Wingate—Mr. God? You're going to get you a cap, and you're going to wear it. See? No ifs, ands, or buts about it. And if you don't leave this office with a green cap on your head then I don't mind telling you that we've got ways of getting one on you before another day passes."

"Well, if I buy one it's going to put me in a bad hole. All the money I've got is what I saved out to pay my room rent this week."

"Listen, fella, if we let horsefeathers like that go here, half the freshman class wouldn't be wearing freshman caps right now. Now I've said all I'm going to to you. Do you want your green cap now or will you wait till later? That's all I want to know. I don't aim to give you any high-pressure sales talk on something that's already been decided for you. Take it or leave it."

Carson reached over into the large pasteboard box, groped far down in it, and brought forth a small green monkey cap. He tossed it on the desk. Charlie Wingate stuck his forefinger in his watch pocket and pulled out a small pad of three carefully folder dollar bills. He unfolded them and laid one on the desk and picked up the cap. Carson put the dollar in his pocket and stood up.

Charlie stood holding his cap. He scuffed the cement floor with his shoe toe and began doggedly, "The only thing is—"

"Aw, that's O.K., Wingate, old man," Carson said suavely. "No hard feelings whatsoever." He held out a freshly opened pack of cigarettes. "Here, have a Treasure Trove on me before you go."

That night all the stools along the counter at The Wigwam were filled when Charlie Wingate came in, still dusty from the drill field. He got himself a set-up back of the counter and went into the kitchen. He moved about the steam-table, dishing up his dinner. He dragged a stool over to a zinc-covered kitchen table and sat down to eat. The kitchen was warm and steamy and the air was thick with the odors of sour chili grease and yellow soap melting in hot dishwater. Charlie's fork slipped through his fingers, and he began nodding over his plate.

Fat Kruger, the night dishwasher and short-order cook, yelled, "Hey, there, wake up and pay for your bed!" Charlie jerked his head up and looked at the ponderous, good-humored cook with half-lidded eyes. "Why'n't you try sleeping in bed once in a w'ile, Charlie?" Fat said in a friendly tone. "You're going to kill yourself if you don't watch out, trying to go without sleep."

"Don't worry, Fat. I can take it," Charlie said.

Almost two hours had to pass before it would be the hour for him to come on, but not time enough for him to walk back to his room and catch a nap, so he took the book on which he had to make an outside reading report in Economics 150 and went up to the last booth to study until nine o'clock. He fell asleep and he did not wake up until Red Hibbert, going off, shook him and told him that it was almost time for him to come on. He closed his book and went back to the washroom. The acrid stench of the mothballs that Nick used to deodorize the latrine cleared his head. He took down his apron and tied it on over his army breeches. Then he slipped into a white coat.

The usual black-coffee addicts came dribbling in. When the telephone rang, Charlie answered it, jotting down short orders to go. The delivery boy came in and went out and

banged off on his motorcycle with paper bags full of "red hots" and nickel hamburgers and coffee in paper cylinders. The Wigwam's white tile shone under the inverted alabaster urns. There was a pale pink reflection in the plate-glass window as the Neon sign outside spelled and re-spelled "Wigwam Eats. Open All Night." A party of drunken Betas came in at ten-thirty and seated themselves noisily in the last booth. They tossed Charlie's economics book out into the aisle with a whoop, and he came and picked it up and took their orders in silence while they kidded him about his flap ears and the grease on his white coat. At eleven o'clock the last whistle at the University power house blew for the closing hour, and a couple of lingering "dates" scurried out. Finally the drunks left, after one had been sick in a corner of the booth. The delivery boy came coasting up at midnight and checked in and roared away again on his motorcycle. The long small hours began inching past.

At one o'clock Charlie finished cleaning up the drunk's mess and he had cleared off the last of the tables. The Wigwam was empty, so he opened the book he must read for Ec 150. He had read a few lines when a bunch of girls from the Theta house down the street came charging in, giggling and talking in gasps and screams, their fur coats clutched over their sleeping pajamas. It was long after the closing hours, and they told Charlie to keep an eye out for the University night watchman. They took up the two back booths and they consulted The Wigwam's printed menu card without failing to read aloud the lines "Nick (Pericles) Pappas," "We Employ Student Help Exclusively," and "Please Do Not Tip. A Smile Is Our Reward" with the customary shrieks. Nearly all ordered filet mignon and French fries, which were not on the menu, but two or three ordered pecan waffles and coffee, which were. When he had served their orders Charlie went back to his book again, but the low buzz of their talk and their sudden spurts of laughter disturbed him and he could not read. At a quarter of two they began peering round corners of their booths. They asked Charlie in stage-whispers if the coast were clear.

Charlie went to the door and looked out on the street and beckoned widely with his arm. They trooped out with their fur coats pulled tight, their fur-trimmed silken mules slapping their bare heels. Charlie went on back to clear away their dishes. They had left about thirty cents as a tip, all in cents and nickels. The coins were carefully imbedded in the cold steak grease and gluey syrup and putty-colored cigarette leavings on their plates. Charlie began stacking the plates without touching the money. He carried the dirty dishes back and set them through the opening in the kitchen wall. Fat Kruger came to the opening and Charlie went back to his book.

Fat called, "Hey, Charlie, you leavin' this tip again?"

"You're damn' right, I'm leaving it!" Charlie said. "I can get along without their tips. They leave it that way every time. I guess they think I'll grabble on their filthy plates to get a lousy thirty cents. It takes a woman to think up something like that."

"Charlie, you're too proud. I don't see where you can afford to be so proud. The way I figure it, thirty cents is thirty cents."

"Hell, I'm not proud, Fat. I just try to keep my self-respect. When those sorority sows come in and plant their tips in the dirt and grease of their plates, damn' if I'll lower myself to grub it out."

He sat down on a counter stool with the economics book before him, trying to fix his mind on it. He read a page. The print became thin blurred parallels of black on the page. His eyelids kept dropping shut and he propped the muscles with his palms at his temples, trying to keep his eyes open. His head jerked forward and he caught it and began reading again. Soon his face lowered slowly through his hands and came to rest on the open book.

Fat Kruger came through the kitchen swinging door and tiptoed up front. Fat stood grinning, watching Charlie sleep. Cramped over with his head on the counter, Charlie snored softly. Fat gave his head a gentle shove, and Charlie started up to catch his balance.

"For God's sakes, guy, you're *dead!*" Fat howled. "Don't you never get no sleep except like that?"

"What time is it?" Charlie said, yawning and arching his back.

"Half-past two."

"Jees, is that all?"

"Charlie, go back there and lay down on the kitchen table. I'll watch the front for you. Nobody'll be coming in for a while."

As he was talking old Uncle Jim Hudson ambled in, a bundle of sweaters, overcoats, and grizzled dewlaps, his black timeclock slung over one shoulder by a leather lanyard. Uncle Jim laid his long, nicked flashlight carefully on the counter and eased himself onto a stool. He ordered a cup of black coffee and in a lecherous wheeze began telling dirty stories selected from his twenty years' experience as a campus night-watchman. Fat Kruger snickered loudly after each telling, and Charlie jerked his eyes open and smiled sleepily. It was three-thirty when Uncle Jim left. Charlie opened his book again.

"Charlie, I wouldn't put my eyes out over that damn' book if I was you, when you're dyin' for sleep," Fat said.

"I've got to get it read, Fat. It's my outside reading in Economics and the whole semester grade depends on it. It's the hardest book to keep your mind on you ever saw. I've been reading on it for over a month and I'm only half through, and he's going to call for these reports any day now. If I flunk Ec I flunk out of school."

"Why mess with reading it? I know a guy over at the Masonic Dorm who'll read it and write your report for two bucks. He writes all my English themes for me, and I'm making a straight A in English. He only charges fifty cents for short themes and two bucks for term papers. You ought to try him."

"Hell, Fat, you get five dollars a week from home. Where am I going to get two dollars for hiring a guy to read this book?"

"Charlie, I just can't figure you out. You never do get any real sleep. You sure must want a college education bad. It don't look to me like you would figure it's worth it."

"Oh, it's worth it! It's a big satisfaction to my folks to have me in college. And where can a man without a college degree get nowadays? But I'll tell you the truth, I didn't know it was going to be like this when I came down here last Fall. I used to read *College Humor* in high school, and when fellows came home from University for the holidays, all dressed up in snappy clothes, talking about dates and football and dances, and using college slang—well, I had a notion I'd be like that when I got down here. The University publicity department sent me a little booklet showing how it was easy to work your way through college. So here I am. I haven't had a date or been to a dance or seen a football game since I enrolled. And there are plenty of others just like me. I guess I'm getting a college education, all right—but the only collegiate thing I've been able to do is go to sleep in class."

"How you get by with sleeping in class, Charlie?"

"I wear those colored spectacles and prop myself, and the profs can't see I've got my eyes closed."

Fat waggled his heavy face mournfully. "Boy, it sure is tough when a man don't get his sleep."

"Yeah, it is," Charlie said, looking down at his book again. "I'll get a break pretty soon, though. I'd rather chop off a hand than to flunk out of University before I'd even finished one semester."

The tardiest of the hundred students enrolled in Dr. Sylvester C. O. Kenshaw's Economics 150 straggled into the lecture room and made their ways to alphabetically-assigned chairs with much scuffling and trampling of toes and mumbled apologies. Ec. 150, renowned as a pipe course, was always crowded. Doctor Kenshaw was the celebrated author of seven textbooks on economics, five of which his students were required to buy each semester. Doctor Kenshaw's national reputation as an economist permitted him to

be erratic about meeting his classes, but fame had never dimmed his fondness for student flattery. The only students who ever flunked Ec 150 were those who gave affront to Doctor Kenshaw by neglecting to buy his textbooks or by not laughing at his wit or by being outrageously inattentive to his lectures.

Doctor Kenshaw was late that morning. Charlie Wingate sat in his chair on the back row in an agony of waiting. He had on his amber glasses and he could fall asleep as soon as Doctor Kenshaw opened his lecture. But he had to stay awake until then. There was a slow ache in the small of his back. The rest of his body was numb. He had not taken off his army shoes for twenty hours, and his feet were moist and swollen. Every time he shifted position his arms and legs were bathed in prickling fire. He kept his eyes open behind the amber lenses, watching the clock. Small noises of the classroom came to him as a low, far-off humming.

When the clock on the front wall showed nine after eleven the seated class began stirring as if it were mounted on some eccentric amusement-park device. Excited whispers eddied out on the warm air of the steam-heated lecture room. "He's giving us another cut!" "He's not meeting this class to-day!" "He's got one more minute to make it!" "Naw; six more! You have to wait fifteen minutes on department heads."

There was a seething argument on this point, but when the clock showed fourteen minutes after eleven a bold leader sprang up and said, "Come on, everybody!" All but five or six especially conscientious students rose and milled after him toward the door. Charlie Wingate followed, thoroughly awakened by the chance of getting to bed so soon. The leader yanked the door open and Doctor Kenshaw stumbled in, all out of breath, his eyeglasses steamed, his pointed gray beard quivering, a vain little man in a greenish-black overcoat.

"Go back to your seats!" Doctor Kenshaw commanded sternly as soon as he could get his breath. He marched over to his lecture table and planked down his leather brief case. He took off his overcoat and began wiping the steam from

his eyeglasses while the students hurried back to their chairs. "It does seem to me," he said, his voice quavering with anger, "that it would be no more than courteous for this class to await my arrival on those rare occasions when I am delayed. Day after day you come lagging into my classes, and I have always been extremely lenient in giving credit for attendance, no matter how tardy your arrival. Certainly it is no more than my privilege to ask that you wait for me occasionally."

A few students exchanged meaning glances. They meant, "Now we're in for it. The old boy has on one of his famous mads."

"To-day, I believe I shall forego delivering my prepared lecture," Doctor Kenshaw went on in a more even voice, but with elaborate sarcasm, "and let *you* do the talking. Perhaps it would be meet to hear a few outside reading reports this morning. All of you doubtless are aware that these reports were due last week, although I had not expected to call for them at once. I trust that I have impressed you sufficiently with the importance of these reports. They represent to me the final result of your semester's work in this course. The grades you receive on these reports will be your grades for the semester. Let us begin forthwith. When your name is called, you will rise and read your report to the class." He opened his roll book.

"Mr. Abbott!" he called. Mr. Abbott stammered an excuse. Doctor Kenshaw passed coldly on to Miss Adams, making no comment. All through the A's it was the same. But with the B's an ashen, spectacled Miss Ballentyne stood up and began reading in a droning voice her report on "The Economic Consequences of the Peace." Obviously Doctor Kenshaw was not listening to her. His hard little eyes under craggy brows were moving up one row and down the other, eager for a victim. On the back row, Charlie Wingate's propped legs had given way and he had slipped far down into his seat, fast asleep. When Doctor Kenshaw's preying eyes reached Charlie they stopped moving. Someone tittered

nervously and then was silent as Doctor Kenshaw jerked his head round in the direction of the noise. Miss Ballentyne droned on.

When she had finished, Doctor Kenshaw said dryly, "Very good, Miss Ballentyne, very good indeed. Er—ah—would someone be kind enough to arouse the recumbent young gentleman in the last row?"

There was a murmur of laughter while everyone turned to look at Milton Weismann nudging Charlie Wingate. Doctor Kenshaw was running down the list of names in his small record book. Milton Weismann gave Charlie another stiff poke in the ribs, and Charlie sprang up quickly. Everyone laughed loudly at that.

"Mr.—ah—*Wingate*, isn't it? Mr. Wingate, your report."

"Pardon me, sir?"

"Mr. Wingate, what was the title of the book assigned to you for report in this class?"

"*Theory of the Leisure Class* by Veblen, sir."

"Ah, then, that's the explanation. So you were assiduously engaged in evolving your own theory of the leisure class. Is that right, Mr. Wingate? You have evidently concluded that Economics 150 is the leisure class."

The class rocked with laughter. Doctor Kenshaw, pleased with his pun and flattered by the response to it, found it hard to keep his face straight. Suddenly he was back in good humor. "Mr. Wingate's theory is quite apparently one to which the majority of this class subscribes. Now I try to be lenient with students in this class. Surely no one could describe me as a hard taskmaster. But I resent your implication that I have been too easygoing. Now these reading reports were assigned to you last September, and you have had ample time to prepare them. I'll not call for any more of them to-day, but at the next session of this class I expect every one of these papers in. As for you, Mr. Wingate, if you'll see me directly after class, I'll be glad to hear any explanation or apology that you may wish to make. I want most of all to be fair. I have always given every student

the benefit of the doubt until a student deliberately flaunts me with his indifference. But I am capable of being quite ruthless, I assure you."

"Thank you, sir," Charlie mumbled. He entered a slow torture, trying to keep awake until the class bell rang. He rolled his hot, red-veined eyes up with drunken precision to see the clock. Fifteen minutes had to pass before the bell would ring.

When the bell rang the class arose quickly and began clumping out. Several co-eds and men, politickers and apple-polishers wangling for A's, crowded about the lecture table. Doctor Kenshaw always remained behind after each class to accept their homage. But to-day he looked up over the heads of the eager group. He silenced their inane questions and flagrant compliments by placing his right forefinger against his thin, unsmiling lips. "Sh-h-h!" he said. The apple-polishers turned their heads in the direction of his gaze and then, giggling softly, tiptoed away. When the last had gone out, Doctor Kenshaw unscrewed his fountain pen and opened his roll book. He ran his finger down the list until he came to "Wingate, C." and in the space opposite under "Smstr Grd" he marked a precise little F.

A whiffing snore escaped Charlie Wingate in the back of the room. Doctor Kenshaw looked back across the varnished chair rows with a frown of annoyance. He took his overcoat from its hanger, slipped into it, and strapped up his brief case. He jammed on his hat and strode out of the lecture room, slamming the door. The noise made a hollow echo in the empty room, but it did not disturb Charlie Wingate. He slept on behind his amber glasses.

NOTES ON "A STUDENT IN ECONOMICS."

What do you think was the purpose of the author in writing this story? What was your feeling about the story when you first read it? Is the author sorry for Charlie Wingate? Does he think no one should

attempt to work his way through college? Or is he indignant at certain elements in the social structure of a university?

What is the problem in the story? What are the elements against which Charlie Wingate is in conflict? Notice that the author makes no comment upon them; he presents them in a series of scenes. Go through the scenes to see how each one presents an aspect of college life or attitude, the sum total bringing defeat to Wingate.

How much time does the story cover? The author has given you a day and a night, once around the clock in Wingate's college life. Does this compression increase the effect of the boy's drudgery and terrible need for sleep? Does it heighten the irony in the attitude toward him of Dean, fellow students, and Professor? Notice the way in which scenes are contrasted, the first scene with that in the Dean's office, the scene at the Wigwam with that in the economics class.

How does the author convey to you the degree of importance which Charlie attaches to staying at the University? Notice that the few subjective details are those of physical sensation, not of thought or emotion.

Is Charlie Wingate well characterized? By the end of the story have you an impression of him as an individual? List a few details which make him more than any boy working his way through college.

What angle of narration is used? The author has not confined himself entirely to the angle of his chief character. The first scene, for example, does not open with Wingate. Why not?

Do you think that the author has distorted facts to

make his point? Fat Kruger, the night dishwasher at The Wigwam, is the only character who has the slightest awareness of Wingate's condition. Has the author been fair in the accusations which the story implies?

HANDBOOK

- I. GRAMMAR
- II. PUNCTUATION
- III. CAPITALIZATION
- IV. DICTION AND USAGE

I. GRAMMAR

Here no attempt is made to outline the grammar of modern English; only the most troublesome forms and constructions are considered. It is assumed that the student has a general knowledge of the construction of an English sentence, and that he is familiar with common grammatical terms. Certain matters involved in sentence formation are also treated in Chapter V.

NOUNS

I. *Possessive case.* Nouns in the possessive case generally end in *s*. Three rules govern the formation of possessive nouns:

1. To form the possessive of a singular noun, add an apostrophe and *s*.

One man's work; the dog's tail.

2. To form the possessive of a plural noun not ending in *s*, add an apostrophe and *s*.

The men's quarters; the children's choice.

3. To form the possessive of a plural noun ending in *s*, add an apostrophe after the final *s*.

The officers' quarters; the boys' mothers.

Exceptions: A word of more than one syllable, ending in an *s* or *z* sound, preferably forms a possessive by the mere addition of an apostrophe.

For conscience' sake; Dickens' characters; Xerxes' army; Cortez' ambition; Steinmetz' inventions; the duchess' lorgnette; Berlioz' music.

EXERCISE

In each of the following expressions, use an apostrophe or an apostrophe plus *s* to form the possessive:

The city's water supply; Arkansas eleven; the deer's tracks; the princess's gown; for the ladies' sake; boys' shoes; women's ways; the marquis's saddle horse; in Jesus' name; Jones' laundry bag; the Joneses' garage; Persis' monkey; Achilles' wrath; Fritz' revolver; Rosencrantz' part.

II. *Latin and Greek plurals.* Many nouns taken over from Latin and Greek retain their foreign plurals. Most words taken from the Greek came to English through Latin, but some were taken directly from Greek.

Examples:

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Original plural</i>	<i>English plural</i>
appendix	appendices	appendixes
index	indices	indexes
fungus	fungi	funguses
memorandum	memoranda	memorandums
automaton	automata	automatons
ovum	ova	
datum	data	
basis	bases	
crisis	crises	
species	species	
phenomenon	phenomena	
alumna	alumnae	
alumnus	alumni	

When a word has both a Latin and an English plural, there is a tendency to differentiate them by using the Latin plural in more bookish, abstract, or scientific senses than the English. For instance, one would speak of "the indices of character," but of "business indexes." "The surgeon removed five appendixes," but "The book contains five appendices." A zoölogist would write *hippopotami*, but a tourist *hippopotamuses*.

NOTE: *Propaganda* is often wrongly associated with such plurals as *data* and *memoranda*. *Propaganda* is singular.

These memoranda were not meant for me.

That propaganda is nonsense.

That is a strange phenomenon.

Many natural phenomena can be easily explained.

EXERCISES

1. Give the singular form of *neuroses*, *gladioli*, *addenda*, *theses*, *matrices*, *minutiae*, *criteria*, *foci*.
2. Give both the Latin and English plurals of *formula*, *syllabus*, *apex*, *crux*.
3. Correct the following:
Where did you find that data?
The phenomena of liquid air is puzzling to me.
What natural phenomenons interest you?
He met all the crises successfully.
There is no criteria to judge by.
Fascist propaganda are making headway.
He doesn't seem to belong to the human specie.

PRONOUNS

I. *Antecedent*.

1. A pronoun must have a definite antecedent. It should not be possible to refer a pronoun to any word but its antecedent.

Wrong: The trapper lived in a cave in the Adirondack Mountains that he had discovered the summer before.

Right: The trapper lived in a cave that he had discovered in the Adirondack Mountains the summer before.

It, however, is often correctly used as an expletive without any antecedent.

It is now five o'clock.

It was snowing hard.

It was easy to see the road.

Is it you, May?

Charles was late, it seems.

2. A pronoun should not stand for a thought expressed by a phrase or clause.

Wrong: Mr. Ralston's novel was praised by the critics, which pleased many people.

Right: Mr. Ralston's novel was praised by the critics, and this recognition pleased many people.

Many people were pleased to know that the critics had praised Mr. Ralston's novel.

In using the relative pronoun *which* and the demonstrative pronouns *this* and *that*, skillful writers do not always feel bound by this rule. The danger of violating it, however, is evident in the following sentence :

We went to the comedy, which was silly.

For if a pronoun can easily refer to a noun or pronoun, it may refuse to stand for the thought that a group of words expresses.

If a noun is used to sum up the meaning of a whole clause, it may properly serve as antecedent of a relative pronoun.

Wrong: They peeled potatoes all the afternoon, which is certainly unpleasant.

Right: They peeled potatoes all the afternoon, an occupation which is certainly unpleasant.

3. Avoid the awkward foreign idiom, using the relative pronoun *which* as a modifier of a noun.

Awkward: They peeled potatoes all the afternoon, which occupation is certainly unpleasant.

The court ruled that no monopoly existed, from which decision two of the judges dissented.

Better: The court ruled that no monopoly existed, but from this decision two of the judges dissented.

4. A pronoun should not stand for a word in the possessive case.

Wrong: In J. A. Symonds' *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, he states. . . .

Right: In his book, *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, J. A. Symonds states. . . .

5. A pronoun referring to the object of a preposition is sometimes awkward or obscure.

Faulty: We sailed along the coast of Maine. It is certainly a beautiful state.

Right: We sailed along the coast of Maine. Maine is certainly a beautiful state.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. In all John's long life, he never failed to keep a promise.
2. I shall write to him tomorrow, which will be in plenty of time.
3. When Betty and her mother reached the gate, she asked to be allowed to play in the garden for a while.
4. On the day he went into the company's office, it had not elected its Board of Directors.
5. He paddled his canoe down one of the tributaries of the Ohio River. It flows into the Mississippi.
6. We strolled in the moonlit garden, which was restful.
7. The children remained an hour at the dinner table, which was much too long.
8. Just as the freshman president rushed into Tom's study, he was opening his Latin grammar.
9. We bought an Angora cat at the pet shop, which had a beautiful coat.
10. The train arrived an hour late, for which reason I missed my dinner.

II. *Agreement.*

1. A pronoun should agree with its antecedent in number.

Wrong: The city of New York needs more subways. They should begin to excavate at once.

References to authorities should be exactly given so that the reader can find it readily.

Right: The city of New York needs more subways. It should begin to excavate at once.

References to authorities should be exactly given so that the reader can find them readily.

2. A pronoun should agree with its antecedent in gender. This rule is scarcely ever violated. It is necessary only to note two exceptions to it:

- a. When a singular subject is both masculine and feminine, the possessive pronoun referring to it should be masculine.

Awkward: Every person has the right to worship God in his or her own way.

Each applicant must present his or her credentials.

Better: Every person has the right to worship God in his own way.

(To a group of men and women) Each applicant must present his credentials.

(To a number of women) Each applicant must present her credentials.

b. The relative pronoun *whose* should normally refer only to persons or animals, but it may refer to inanimate things whenever *of which* would sound awkward.

Awkward: After a long wait, the door, the iron hinges of which were rusty with age, was slowly opened.

Better: After a long wait, the door, whose iron hinges were rusty with age, was slowly opened.

EXERCISE

Correct or improve the following sentences:

1. Missouri is a good state, but they need better roads.
2. Every member must pay his or her dues before the next meeting.
3. Keep your data in order, or you will not be able to use it when the time comes.
4. We studied in a room, the lighting of which was indirect.
5. We have a good legislature, but they pass too many useless laws.

III. *Each, every, either, neither, one*, and indefinite pronouns ending in *-one* or *-body*, are singular. When one of these pronouns is used as a subject, it must have a singular verb. Pronouns and possessive adjectives referring to any of these pronouns should be singular, except when a singular would be absurd; for instance, Every man went to the class dinner, and while he was at table, his overcoat was stolen.

Wrong: Each of you have received your reward.

Neither of those apartments are large enough for us.

Everyone must tell all they know.
Somebody ran their car off that bridge.

Right: Each of you has received his reward.
Neither of those apartments is large enough for us.
Everyone must tell all he knows.
Somebody ran his car off that bridge.

None may be treated either as singular or as plural.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. Are either of the answers right?
2. Nobody can always know their own mind.
3. Have each of you made your choice?
4. Nobody did their best.
5. Neither of them pretend to know.
6. Will everyone reach their homes safely?
7. Someone should confess that they broke those windows.
8. Any one of you would surely give what you could.
9. Everybody was sure of themselves.
10. Each of those tanks are to be filled with oil.

Each, every, either, or neither, used as an adjective, always modifies a singular noun. None of these adjectives affects the number of a verb, possessive adjective, or a following subject.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. Every soldier should polish their shoes.
2. Neither candidate is all that I could wish them to be.
3. Each automobile must be carefully inspected; otherwise they cannot be guaranteed.
4. Either overcoat would be too expensive if they did not have those fur linings.
5. Every suspicious character will be arrested so that they may be questioned.
6. Has every boy signed their names?

IV. *Case.*

1. The pronoun used as the complement of any finite form of the verb *be* must be in the nominative case. Colloquial, but not formal, usage makes an exception for *It is me*.

Wrong: The boys we like best are him and his brother.
It surely is him.

Right: The boys we like best are he and his brother.
It is surely he.

2. The subject of an infinitive must be in the objective case.

Wrong: He wanted you and I to go with him.
The bandits forced my father and I to get out of the car.

Right: He wanted you and me to go with him.
The bandits forced my father and me to get out of the car.

3. When the infinitive *to be* has a subject, it takes a complement in the objective case; when it has no subject, it takes a complement in the nominative case.

Wrong: I thought it to be she.
I was believed to be her.

Right: I thought it to be her.
I was believed to be she.

4. Be sure that every object of a preposition is in the objective case.

Wrong: Such magazines do not interest men like O'Leary and I.
Who was the benefit performance given for?

Right: Such magazines do not interest men like O'Leary and me.
Whom was the benefit performance given for? *Or*
For whom was the benefit performance given?

5. Every object of a verb must be in the objective case.

Wrong: Mrs. MacDonald, who I just met on the street, lives in Dallas.
The bullies pushed Mary and I off the sidewalk.

Right: Mrs. MacDonald, whom I just met on the street, lives in Dallas.

The bullies pushed Mary and me off the sidewalk.

6. To make sure that a pronoun after *than* or *as* is in the right case, use that case which would be correct if the missing sentence elements were restored.

Wrong: She dances more gracefully than me.

His brother is as good an acrobat as him.

The State must be impartial: it must punish you as well as he.

Right: She dances more gracefully than I. (*Do* is understood.)

His brother is as good an acrobat as he. (*Is* is understood.)

The State must be impartial: it must punish you as well as (it punishes) him.

7. When *who* or *whoever* seems to be the object of a verb or preposition and at the same time to be subject of a following verb, it is to be treated as a subject and kept in the nominative case. The reason is that the true object in such instances is not *who* or *whoever*, but the whole relative clause.

Wrong: I have no idea as to whom is suitable.

"Plunge the dagger into whomever opens that door."

Right: I have no idea as to who is suitable.

"Plunge the dagger into whoever opens that door."

8. The parenthetical use of such expressions as *I said*, *Charles thought*, *we knew* between *who* and its verb does not change the case of *who*.

Wrong: Those loafers whom I said would flunk have dropped out.

The girl whom Charles thought was an actress was really a night-club hostess.

Right: Those loafers who I said would flunk have dropped out.

The girl who Charles thought was an actress was really a night-club hostess.

9. *Us* should never be attached to a noun in the nominative case.

Wrong: *Us* fellows were ready to quit work.

Right: *We* fellows were ready to quit work.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. This is him speaking.
2. He thought it to be I.
3. Who will you give the money to?
4. The only people in the car were her and her mother.
5. The man who you work for, is no friend of mine.
6. Between you and I, I don't believe that story.
7. Don't make Laura and I go.
8. Nobody had more fun than us girls.
9. They came upon a man whom I supposed was wanted by the police.
10. You think faster than me.
11. He will surrender to whomever discovers him.
12. A telegram came saying that Fox, whom we knew was ill, had died.
13. I wish I knew the man who you were talking to.
14. I promise to find whoever you want.
15. They all thought it was me, disguised as a policeman.

VERBS

I. A verb must agree with its subject in number.

1. A singular subject to which other substantives have been attached by prepositions of accompaniment remains singular. Phrases introduced by such expressions as *along with*, *together with*, *as well as*, *in addition to*, and *including* do not influence the number of the verb.

Wrong: General Biggs, along with his staff and various other officers, were examining the captured trenches.

Right: General Biggs, along with his staff and various other officers, was examining the captured trenches.

2. When one uses the expletive *there*, one must choose the correct verb form before one expresses the subject.

Wrong: There is three nuggets in the secret drawer.

Right: There are three nuggets in the secret drawer.

3. Singular subjects connected by *or* or *nor* take a singular verb.

Wrong: Either this dress or that suit me.

Neither John nor Ralph have arrived.

Right: Either this dress or that suits me.

Neither John nor Ralph has arrived.

4. When the parts of a compound subject whose parts are connected by *or* or *nor* are both singular and plural, the verb agrees with the nearer part.

Wrong: Neither that table nor those two chairs looks well on that side of the room.

Either the children or Mary have to wash the dishes.

Right: Neither that table nor those chairs look well on that side of the room.

Either the children or Mary has to wash the dishes.

5. When a singular collective noun is felt to name a group as a unit, it takes a singular verb; when it is felt to name the members of a group severally, it takes a plural verb.

Wrong: The Columbia crew are gaining on Cornell.

The crew is putting its sweaters on.

The company state that they are bankrupt.

Right: The Columbia crew is gaining on Cornell.

The crew are putting their sweaters on.

The company states that it is bankrupt.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. Every evening at sundown the scout master together with the scouts go to the foot of the flag pole.

2. Mr. Jones in addition to the members of his family think that my way is wrong.

3. There is cake and cookies in that jar.

4. Either my brother or yours know more about arithmetic than any boy in the class.

5. Those rugs or that carpet need to be removed.

6. There was two hundred and fifty men in each company.

7. Neither that box of candy nor those flowers is mine.

8. Either that dictionary or those reference books contains the information you desire.

9. The flock of geese were on their way south.

10. The Ladies' Aid Society are planning a strawberry social.

II. The verb must agree with its subject in person.

1. The contraction *don't* may be used colloquially after all persons but the third singular. Here the correct colloquial form is *doesn't*.

Wrong: She don't look well.

Right: (colloquial) She doesn't look well. (formal) She does not look well.

2. The relative pronoun is in the same person as its antecedent, and takes a verb in that person.

Wrong: Our Father, which is in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

Do not say that it is I who is guilty.

Right: Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

Do not say that it is I who am guilty.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences.

1. The law don't require churches to pay taxes.

2. She don't deserve consideration.

3. The man who writes the sporting page don't know the facts.

4. You, my noble fellow, who looks at me so trustingly, take courage.

5. If Thomas thinks it is I who is responsible, let him say so.
6. Don't ask me, who knows nothing about it.

III. Sequences of tenses.

1. When a verb in the past tense has a clause for its complement, the verb in this clause must be in either the past or past perfect; it cannot be in the present tense, even if it refers to present or future time. Mistakes are made with the following forms:

<i>Present tense</i>	<i>Past tense</i>	<i>Past perfect tense</i>
may	might	might have
can	could	could have
shall	should	should have
will	would	would have

Wrong: He said he may come tomorrow.
 Johnson declared that the kidnaper will be caught.

Right: He said he might come tomorrow.
 Johnson declared that the kidnaper would be caught.

An exception is made, however, when the thought in the subordinate or complementary clause is supposed or asserted to be true always.

Franklin said that honesty is the best policy.
 Pasteur was the first to demonstrate that many diseases are produced by parasitic organisms.

2. The past perfect tense is used to refer to a time further back in the past than another past time.

Wrong: He swore that he often talked with the murdered man.

Right: He swore that he had often talked with the murdered man.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. She replied that I may come.
2. He asked me yesterday whether or not you were in Germany last year.

3. Last night I was wondering how he won the election a year ago.

4. Now he is wondering what he had done yesterday.

5. I suspected that the kettle will not boil.

6. Even when the game was over, he never suspected that his error lost the pennant.

IV. "*Shall*" and "*Will*." In everyday speech *will* has almost entirely supplanted *shall*. But speakers and writers of taste and discrimination regularly employ *shall* in the following three ways:

1. *Shall* is used with the first person to express simple futurity or expectation. When the speaker expresses determination or promise with the first person, he uses *will*.

Colloquial: I will probably see Jane somewhere tomorrow.
We will be happy to accept your invitation. (Note that the writer does not mean to express a determination to be happy.)
The coach says I will run the high hurdles.

Right: I shall probably see Jane somewhere tomorrow.
We shall be happy to accept your invitation.
The coach says I shall run the high hurdles.
I will not fail, I promise you.

2. *Shall* is used with the first person in all questions. With other persons use *will*.

Colloquial: Will we go or not?
Will I play at shortstop?

Right: Shall we go or not?
Shall I play at shortstop?

3. *Shall* is used with the second and third persons to indicate that the speaker is determined.

Colloquial: I tell you he will not enter my room.
Junior, don't argue with me; you will take that gum out of your mouth.

Right: I tell you he shall not enter my room.
Junior, don't argue with me; you shall take that gum out of your mouth.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences, and refer by number to the rule involved.

1. I suppose I will fail unless I work harder.
2. Will we go in to dinner?
3. I shall make him work out that problem, whether he wants to or not.
4. We are determined that they will not go.
5. Will I carry your bag, Madam?
6. You will not pass over my threshold; I hate you.
7. She shall go to Europe next year, I presume.
8. It shall soon be my turn, for there are only two men ahead of me.
9. If I walk through the park, I will be robbed.
10. Shall they probably be here soon?

V. "*Would*" and "*Should*." These words have certain special uses and meanings in which they are employed regardless of the person of the subject.

1. *Would* is used with all persons to express habitual or repeated action in the past.

During that long summer, we would sit in the shade; you would read the *Earthly Paradise* aloud, and the cicadas would sing a drowsy accompaniment.

2. *Would* is used with all persons to express past determined action.

In spite of orders the lieutenant would drink that rotgut. I would not, though he tried to persuade me.

3. *Should* is used with all persons as the equivalent of *ought to*.

The professor should be just, and I should get an A. You should not be jealous of me.

4. *Should* is used with all persons in clauses introduced by *if* or *unless*, except when there is an act of will or determination.

If I should be late, do not worry.

If you should be late, do not worry.

Note that when the writer emphasizes an act of will or determination on the part of the subject, *would* is used with all persons in such clauses.

If you would only marry me, I should be happy.

He refused to go unless I would promise to marry him.

5. Apart from these special uses of *would* and *should*, use them according to the same rules that apply to *will* and *shall*. Use *should* with the first person (a) to express futurity or expectation:

I knew that I should win.

(b) to ask a question:

Should we be equal to the task?

(c) with the second and third persons to express determination on the part of the subject of the main clause:

The sheriff gave orders that mustard gas should be used against the strikers.

Otherwise, use *would*.

He knew that he would win.

Would they be equal to the task?

The sheriff knew that mustard gas would be used against the strikers.

EXERCISE

Improve the following sentences, and in each cite the number of the rule violated:

1. If I had \$40, I think I would buy a violin.
2. I swear I should not do it, even if they should try to force me.
3. Hearst telegraphed orders that all his papers would refer to the New Deal as the Raw Deal.
4. Would I be comfortable in the upper berth?
5. She feared that he should not last through the game.
6. If you should die, life should be empty.

7. If I should graduate tomorrow, I would not be educated.

8. Should it be wise to ask the conductor?

9. The notice announced that all employees should be given a vacation without pay.

10. I would like to go to the theatre, and if our guests were not engaged, they should like to go to the theatre with us.

VI. *Mode*. The indicative mode has usurped most of the functions of the old subjunctive, but some of the old subjunctive forms, especially of the verb *be*, survive.

1. The present subjunctive is still occasionally used to express wishes or conditions.

If there be any objection, let it be heard.

Come what will, I will remain in the haunted churchyard all night.

So be it.

2. The past subjunctive form, *were*, is required to express wishes and conditions contrary to present fact. Wishes and conditions contrary to past fact are covered by the past perfect tense, *had been*.

Wrong: If I was a senior, I should run a car.

Would that I was on the stage!

Doesn't Eileen wish she was back in Ireland?

I wish that I lived during the Renaissance.

Right: If I were a senior, I should run a car.

Would that I were on the stage!

Doesn't Eileen wish she were back in Ireland?

I wish that I had lived during the Renaissance.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. I wish I was dead.

2. Would that he was my son!

3. If he was a charitable man, Perkins would not make such statements.

4. I want you to act just as if this was your house.

5. I wish that the constitutional right to free speech was a reality.

6. Sue would be charming if she was not so patronizing.
 7. If I was sure it was a good novel, I would have read it long ago.

INFINITIVES

I. The infinitive of a transitive verb has the following forms:

	Active	Passive
<i>Present</i>	to write	to be written
<i>Perfect</i>	to have written	to have been written

Certain constructions permit or require the omission of *to*. Compare: His father forced him *to write*; his father made him *write*. Both *to write* and *write* are infinitives.

II. Do not place a word or group of words between the sign of the infinitive *to* and the verb itself, unless there is some clear gain in euphony or sense.

Wrong: To thoroughly understand descriptive geometry is no easy task.

He was asked to as soon as possible publicly announce that the mortgage would be foreclosed.

Right: To understand descriptive geometry thoroughly is no easy task.

He was asked to announce publicly as soon as possible that the mortgage would be foreclosed.

Hallam hoped to more than recoup his losses.

III. When a phrase expressing purpose, beginning with *in order to* or with the sign of the infinitive, precedes a clause, the unexpressed subject must be the expressed subject of the clause.

Wrong: In order to write satisfactory themes, they must be carefully planned.

(Note that the themes do not write.)

To make a good fascist, one part of idealist should be added to three parts of bully. (One part of idealist does not make a good fascist.)

Right: In order to write satisfactory themes, one (or you) must plan them carefully.

To make a good fascist, add one part of idealist to three parts of bully.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. To quickly forgive an injury is not easy for everyone.
2. To do that job properly, the work will have to progress slowly.
3. It would be folly to even tell our minister.
4. To start a car whose battery is weak, it should be pushed along for a few yards before the clutch is thrown in.
5. To get ahead in competitive business, religion is a hindrance.

PARTICIPLES AND GERUNDS

I. The participle is part verb and part adjective. Like a verb, it can be modified by an adverb and take an object; like an adjective, it must modify a noun or pronoun. The common forms are the present, ending in *-ing*, and the past, ending commonly but not always in *-ed*, *-t*, or *-n*.

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Present participle</i>	<i>Past participle</i>
cause	causing	caused
leave	leaving	left
throw	throwing	thrown
sing	singing	sung

Note the adjectival use of participles in the following:

The *discouraged* instructor came across a *fascinating* theme.
He read on, *chuckling* with delight.

The gerund, like the present participle, ends in *-ing*. Like the participle, it may be modified by an adverb and may take an object, but it serves not as an adjective but as a noun.

Thinking is a science. By thinking freely man has progressed.
Who would condemn rigorous thinking?

II. A participle cannot be used independently; it must modify a noun or pronoun, clearly related to it by position or sense. (See also p. 110.)

Wrong: The grass had turned brown, caused by the intense heat.

Feeling miserable, the puppy cheered me up.

The class was dismissed, thus enabling me to catch the train.

Looking up at the clouds, one looked like an elephant.

Right: The grass had turned brown because of the intense heat.

When I felt miserable, the puppy cheered me up.

The dismissal of the class enabled me to catch the train.

Looking up at the clouds, we saw one shaped like an elephant.

Exception is made for certain participles like *considering*, *judging*, *speaking*, and participial phrases like *taking into account*:

Considering everything, the prospect is bright.

Strictly speaking, no man is free.

Judging by his performance yesterday, Perry should win the medal.

The participles *provided* and *granted* are frequently used with *that* to introduce clauses and are then classed as conjunctions; they need not modify substantives.

Griffin agreed to go provided that he went alone.

Granted that Susan is silly, Charles loves her.

III. When a gerund is the object of a preposition (except *of*), the unexpressed subject of the gerund must be the expressed subject of the clause or sentence.

Wrong: After laughing heartily, the joke was soon forgotten.
Your digestion will improve by eating less.

Right: After laughing heartily, we soon forgot the joke.
You will improve your digestion by eating less.

Certain violations of this rule are permissible: (a) when the gerund has practically become a noun (We were alarmed by distant firing); (b) when the subject of the gerund is indicated by a possessive (I was startled by Aunt Wilhelmina's removing her wig); (c) when the clause in which the gerund occurs is of general application and no particular person or persons constitute the subject (In concluding a paragraph, emphasis is paramount).

ELLIPTICAL CLAUSES

An elliptical clause is a subordinate clause introduced by *when, though, if, while*, etc., and omitting the subject and some form of the verb *be*. For example: Though lazy, Harold was astute. Note that "he was" has been omitted. Elliptical clauses are correct whenever, as in this case, the unexpressed subject is the same as the expressed subject of the main clause.

Wrong: While reading my paper, the parrot squawked.
Though seldom venturing from his hideout, the G-men found him at last.

Right: While reading my paper, I was startled by a squawk.
Or
While I was reading my paper, the parrot squawked.
Though he seldom ventured from his hideout, the G-men found him at last.

The elliptical clauses, *if possible, if so, if not, whenever possible*, are exceptions to this rule.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. Coming through the dark ravine, the sun was hidden from us.
2. His sight was poor, caused by malnutrition in childhood.
3. Though climbing as fast as we could, the top of the mountain still seemed as far above us as ever.
4. When ten years old, Grandfather died.

5. While dressing, the doorbell rang.
6. After discussing the question, a vote was taken.
7. Feeling that something was wrong, the actions of the crowd naturally interested me.

(For more defective sentences of this type, see p. 114.)

ADJECTIVES

I. After the verbs *taste*, *smell*, *look*, and *feel*, use an adjective to state an attribute of the subject. An adverb cannot add meaning to a subject.

NOTE: When *well* means *healthy*, it is an adjective.

Wrong: How sweetly she looks!
 Those roses smell fragrantly.
 My dinner tastes well.
 He felt awkwardly in her presence.

Right: How sweet she looks!
 Those roses smell fragrant.
 My dinner tastes good.
 He felt awkward in her presence.
 Don't you feel well?

II. In the phrase *due to*, *due* is properly speaking an adjective and should clearly modify a substantive.

Questionable: He overcame his lassitude, due to his powerful will. (Note that his lassitude was not due to his powerful will.)

Right: He overcame his lassitude, due to his ill health. (Note that his lassitude was due to his ill health.)

It must be recognized that *due to* is being used increasingly by respectable writers as a phrasal preposition like *owing to*. But since the most scrupulous writers still avoid this use, the student is urged to do likewise.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. I taste bad; my cold has impaired my sense of smell.

2. Your perfume smells too strongly.
3. She looks beautifully.
4. That dessert looks well.
5. They felt badly about his death.
6. My headache makes my eyes feel badly.
7. That Limburger tastes disgustingly.
8. Due to repairs the bridge is closed.
9. The Dean says that due to overcutting I cannot receive credit.
10. Enrollment is increasing due to the fact that times are improving.

ADVERBS

I. *Good, sure, mighty, real, some* are not to be used as adverbs.

Wrong: My pipe sure doesn't draw good.
That coat is mighty cumbersome.
I feel some better now.

Right: My pipe surely doesn't draw well.
That coat is very cumbersome.
I feel somewhat better now.

The adverb *right* should not be used in the sense of *very* except in certain phrases: *know right well, Right Honorable, Right Reverend*.

Wrong: Lilian looks right lovely tonight.
The chauffeur drove right fast.

Right: Lilian looks most lovely tonight.
The chauffeur drove very fast.
He knew right well it was not safe.

II. A past participle should never be modified by *very* or *too*, unless it has become an adjective like *tired, drunk, or agéd*.

Wrong: Aren't you very annoyed by the proceedings?

Right: Aren't you much annoyed by the proceedings?

III. Some adverbs that often take the *-ly* ending can still be used correctly in their older forms. Many adverbs cannot end in *-ly*, for example, *straight*, *much*, *over*, *fast* or *hard* (not meaning *scarcely*).

Right: Go slow. Go slowly. Speak more loudly.

Wrong: Walk straightly. You are not overly tired.

Right: Walk straight. You are not overtired.

IV. *Almost*, *ever*, and *never* should be so placed that they will naturally modify the right word.

Wrong: He is the tallest man I almost ever saw.

I don't ever think it rains in the Sahara.

Right: He is almost the tallest man I ever saw.

I think it never rains in the Sahara.

V. In the interests of accurate expression, place *only* right before or right after the word it modifies. (See p. 632.)

Colloquial: Jim has only read three of Meredith's novels.

Better: Jim has read only three of Meredith's novels.

VI. The adverb *most* should never be used in formal writing as a shortened form of *almost*.

Wrong: We were most home when the tire blew out.

Right: When we had almost reached home, the tire blew out.

EXERCISE

Correct or improve the following sentences:

1. She was very hurt by my remark.
2. Clare walked queenly into the room.
3. They were too interested in what the duke was saying.
4. Few men can think straightly.
5. Things are not going good at the fraternity.
6. I swam out to the point, almost, before I turned back.
7. The performance will only be given twice.
8. They only considered him to be a man of talent, but he was surely a genius.
9. Is his work most done?

10. They struck fiercely and hardly.
11. He most thought he would miss the train.
12. He behaved awkward in her presence.
13. He never played right good.
14. It is most time to open the debate.
15. We are very indebted to you.
16. Alice will never be overly attractive.
17. They sure do work right fast.

CONJUNCTIONS

I. A coördinating conjunction, such as *but*, *and*, *or*, must connect similar constructions. If it introduces a relative clause, it must be preceded by a relative clause. If it introduces a participial phrase, it must be preceded by a participial phrase. If it merely introduces an adverb, it must be preceded by an adverb. Failure to follow this rule produces a lack of symmetry, a lopsided effect. (On this defect see also p. 115.)

Wrong: The president made an excellent speech, but which was somewhat too long. (The coördinating conjunction *but* wrongly connects an independent clause to a dependent clause.)

Because his acquaintance with French was slight and being none too good in German, Lowery hesitated about taking the post. (The coördinating conjunction *and* wrongly connects a clause to a phrase.)

Right: The president made a speech, which was excellent but somewhat too long.

Or

The president made an excellent speech, but it was somewhat too long.

Because his acquaintance with French was slight and because he was none too good in German, Lowery hesitated about taking the post.

Or

Having only a slight acquaintance with French and being none too good in German, Lowery hesitated about taking the post.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. She has many beautiful gowns in her wardrobe and none of which, let me tell you, has ever been worn.

2. Being a good fellow and because he hated to cause trouble, he consented to go.

3. John is a man of many excellent qualities, but who cannot always be depended on.

4. I do not like men flattering me and who do not mean a word they say.

(For other defective sentences of this type, see p. 118.)

INCORRECT DOUBLE USES

I. A word should not be used in two ways at the same time even though either way alone would be correct.

Wrong: He likes to recall the honor that was tendered to him and he refused to accept. (The relative pronoun *that* is both nominative and objective.)

Right: He likes to recall the honor that was tendered to him and that he refused to accept.

II. A word should not have one correct use and another implied use that is incorrect.

Wrong: He was a good man, but the others scoundrels. (*Was* incorrectly doing the work of a plural verb.)

Right: He was a good man, but the others were scoundrels.

Wrong: The demands were tyrannous and rejected by the colonists. (*Were* is both principal verb and auxiliary.)

Right: The demands were tyrannous; therefore they were rejected by the colonists.

Wrong: That car is as easy to handle, if not easier, than mine.

Right: That car is as easy to handle as mine, if not easier.

Wrong: He has always and always will believe what I tell him.

Right: He has always believed and always will believe what I tell him.

Wrong: He was apt and interested in the work.

Right: He was apt at and interested in the work.

Wrong: He is one of my best, if not my best, friend.

Right: He is one of my best friends, if not my best friend.

EXERCISE

Correct the following sentences:

1. He is the man whom I recommend, and, to my way of thinking, can be of great service to you.
2. He has a stable full of good horses; we, only one worthless nag.
3. I believe that an optometrist can measure the curvature of the eye as accurately, if not more accurately, than an oculist.
4. He was foolish and laughed at by the girls.
5. That is one of the least interesting, if not the least interesting novel, I have ever read.
6. That is a movement which I heartily favor, but, I suppose, will come to nothing.

II. PUNCTUATION

THE PERIOD

I. The period has three regular uses:

1. To close a complete declarative sentence.

It is a moot question whether a high birth rate among the shiftless, lazy, and stupid will not mean the steady deterioration of the race, the collapse of democracy, and the end of liberty.

2. To indicate an abbreviation or contraction, such as:
Mr. P. K. Freer, Ave., etc., La., A.D.

3. To indicate the beginning of a decimal.

Multiply 4.6 by .059.

SPECIAL WARNING: THE PERIOD FAULT

Except under special circumstances explained on p. 95, it is a grave error in punctuation to set off an incomplete sentence—a word, phrase, or subordinate clause—as if it were a complete sentence. For discussion, illustrations, and exercises, see pp. 95-99.

Wrong: Tools by which it acquires wealth.

Not only in the color scheme, but also in the tying.

Although the Republican Party has the endorsement of Wall Street.

THE COMMA

I. Interjections that express little or no feeling are set off by commas.

Oh, the dinner was good enough.

Well, we may as well wait.

II. A noun used in address—a vocative—should be set off by commas.

I should like to know now, Mark, whether or not you will be able to come.

Your Honor, I have nothing to add to my original statement.

Please pass the butter, Mrs. Copley.

III. A comma should separate the items of an address or a date, with the following exceptions:

1. In an address a comma should not stand between the number of the house and the name of the street.

Wrong: He lives at 5237, Pershing Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

Right: He lives at 5237 Pershing Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

2. In a date the number that stands for the day of the month is not separated from the name of the month.

Wrong: Jean-Jacques Rousseau was born at Geneva on June, 28, 1712.

Right: Jean-Jacques Rousseau was born at Geneva on June 28, 1712.

IV. Commas should be used to set off short parenthetical expressions that are felt to be rather closely connected with the sentence in which they stand.

Dumb, the dictionary says, means "unable to speak."

There is, I suppose, no other way of finding Simonson.

V. The absolute construction should be set off by commas.

Our money being gone, we were forced to look for work.

VI. An appositive noun or pronoun, or an adjective in the appositive position, along with its modifiers, should be set off by commas.

Wilson, the captain of our basketball team, hurt his wrist last night.

Beer, light and dark, was always on tap.

Brave men, those who take death lightly, never desert their principles in time of danger.

EXERCISE

(Rules I to VI inclusive): Punctuate:

1. That being the truth you certainly will not conceal it.
2. Well Mr. Jones I can say no more.
3. Come John speak up.
4. Needless to say Helen my sister's friend will do all she can.
5. On Friday March 31 I will start for Watertown Connecticut.
6. We my father and I are now living at 502 Lake Street North Tompkinsville New York.
7. The play being over everyone I supposed would go directly home.
8. On April 1 1917 the United States being on the verge of war Tom enlisted in the navy.
9. I say old fellow may I have a five-spot?
10. You were I believe the first man I met when I came here in May 1879.
11. Alas he is my friend no longer.
12. Tea hot or cold is distasteful to me.
13. My address Mrs Quinn is 13 Pequot Ave Boonton Cal

VII. A comma should stand after the words that introduce a short quotation. In informal writing, a comma is correct after the words that introduce a quotation of any length.

Mother asked, "Where do you want me to sit?"

VIII. The members of a series of words or phrases should be separated from each other by commas. It is now the best practice to use a comma before the conjunction that connects the last two members of a series.

I have lived in Scranton, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia.

Two nouns connected by a conjunction may be used as a single member of a series.

Ice cream, orange ice, or peaches and cream would be a good dessert.

Short independent or dependent clauses which express similar meaning are separated from each other by commas when they are used in a series.

In our act Father dances, Mother sings, and I play the piano.

The men laughed heartily, the women smiled, and the young girls giggled.

Whatever he thinks, whatever he says, or whatever he does, I shall no longer be his friend.

IX. The coördinating conjunction that connects words or phrases, unless it connects the last two members of a series, is not preceded by a comma.

Wrong: He went to England, and then to France.

Right: He went to England and then to France.

Wrong: Both the Cadillac, and the Pierce-Arrow are expensive cars.

Right: Both the Cadillac and the Pierce-Arrow are expensive cars.

X. When *or* connects two words to show that they mean the same thing, use a comma.

Wrong: I like orange marmalade, or raspberry jam on my toast.
I shall sell my Latin grammar, or my French dictionary.

Right: We made the trip by subway, or underground as it is called here in London.

We were forced to apply to the boss, or unofficial ruler of the community.

Ask the president or the dean.

XI. Adjectives or participles modifying the same noun should be separated from each other by a comma.

The mock army fired light, fluffy balls of cotton from its paste-board cannon.

His was a dark, sinister face.

Exceptions: 1. Cardinal or ordinal numerals, such as *six* or *ninetieth*, are not separated from a following adjective.

2. Adjectives immediately preceding a noun and felt to

be intimately linked to it, such as adjectives denoting species, material, or nationality, are not separated by commas from preceding adjectives.

3. A series of two or more adjectives which has hardened into a formula and is run together in speech, is not broken by commas.

A group of twenty ferocious savages approached us.
This is the sixth annoying interruption I have had to-day.
He turned out to be a proud renegade French priest.
Buy me a gross of medium-hard Venus pencils.
That is a smart Irish tweed suit you are wearing.
"He is a fine big fellow; she is a dear sweet thing."

EXERCISE

(Rules VII to XI inclusive) : Punctuate :

1. Have you enough butter bread and sugar in the house
2. I am very fond of tomatoes or love-apples as people used to call them
3. Dark lustrous hair contrasts strikingly with her fair complexion
4. I swim I ride horseback and I take long walks to keep my weight down
5. Pigs' knuckles and sauerkraut liver and bacon and corned beef and cabbage are his favorite dishes
6. There can be no doubt about his good intentions his ability or his integrity
7. I know that he will pack his suitcase at once that he will rush to catch the next train and that in an hour he will be in my arms
8. They visited Spain Northern Africa and the Levant
9. Will you go shopping today or tomorrow
10. Many little forlorn birds spend the winter in that swamp

XII. A comma should stand before the conjunction that connects two independent or two dependent clauses. *And*, *but*, and *for* are the common coördinating conjunctions. *While* is a coördinating conjunction when it expresses comparison or contrast.

Then the lifeboat was lowered, and we pulled away towards the derelict.

They might be able to succeed, but they would lose much in the attempt.

Merton was a chap who feared no man, and who fought at the drop of the hat.

Girls are usually good at spelling, while boys excel in arithmetic.

Exception: When one or both of the two independent clauses contain commas, it is often best to change the comma before the coördinating conjunction to a semicolon.

When the officials, Mr. White and Mr. Rawlins, arrived, the work began at once; but shortly afterwards a labor agitator, who had managed to steal into the yards, succeeded in bringing on a strike for an eight-hour day.

XIII. According to the most careful practice, a comma should follow a dependent clause which precedes the clause on which it is dependent.

If you go to California, you will never want to leave.

I dropped my pocketbook, and when I reached for it, it had vanished.

The rule should be followed rigidly whenever there is a possibility that the reader might not see at once where the dependent clause ended.

Wrong: After Cecilia had eaten the parrot perched on her finger.

When the submarine sank the cruiser, diverted from its course, continued across the Atlantic.

Right: After Cecilia had eaten, the parrot perched on her finger.

When the submarine sank, the cruiser, diverted from its course, continued across the Atlantic.

XIV. A restrictive modifier should be distinguished carefully from a nonrestrictive modifier, since the punctuation is different. Notice the difference in the nature and the punctuation of the two following instances of restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.

A grade such as Whitaker got in Biology 1 is unique.

A grade of 98, such as Whitaker got in Biology 1, is unique.

In the first sentence the clause beginning "such as Whitaker got" is necessary to specify or identify what grade you have in mind. It is restrictive; it cannot be omitted without destroying the sense. In the second sentence the clause beginning "such as Whitaker got" is not necessary to specify or identify what grade you have in mind. It is nonrestrictive; it could be omitted without destroying the sense.

The rule, then, is: If a modifying clause could be omitted from a sentence without destroying or changing the sense, surround it by commas. If, however, it is essential to the meaning, do not surround it by commas.

Chris Hart, who is warming up now, will pitch.

The fellow who is warming up now is Chris Hart.

My boat, which doesn't leak, will serve.

Any boat that does not leak will serve.

The same principle applies to adjective phrases following a noun or pronoun. If they can be omitted without destroying or changing the sense, surround them by commas. If they are essential to the sense, do not surround them by commas.

Larson's automobile, capable of making ninety miles an hour, is for sale.

Any automobile capable of making ninety miles an hour should not be permitted on the highways.

No. 65 Adams Street, standing next the engine house, burned down last night.

The house standing next the engine house burned down last night.

XV. Conjunctive adverbs or adverbial phrases are frequently set off in speech by a slight pause. Typical words and phrases of this kind are: *therefore*, *accordingly*, *hence*, *then* (not indicating time but logical conclusion), *besides*, *furthermore*, *moreover*, *still*, *however*, *nevertheless*, *consequently*, *finally*, *in the first place*, *secondly*, *thirdly*, etc., *to be sure*, *for example*, *indeed*, *in fact*, *to tell the truth*, *on*

the other hand, in the last analysis, by the way. When any of these expressions is set off in speech by a slight pause, it should be set off in writing by commas.

Tell me, then, what you know. (Here *then* has the meaning of *accordingly*. Distinguish from the adverb *then*, denoting time relationship, which is not set off by commas.)

We infer, therefore, that Caspar was lying.

To be sure, Geraldine is a brilliant girl.

She is, moreover, full of enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, she lacks perseverance.

When, now, the marines were ready, they opened fire.

Note that when these conjunctive adverbs are so placed that they are not set off in speech by pauses, they are not set off in writing by commas.

Then tell me what you know.

We therefore infer that Caspar was lying.

She nevertheless lacks perseverance.

Now when the marines were ready, they opened fire.

XVI. Use a comma whenever a sentence would not be immediately clear without it.

Wrong: Policemen rushed to the scene of the accident soon were able to maintain order.

Right: Policemen, rushed to the scene of the accident, soon were able to maintain order.

Wrong: Five minutes to four tired men seemed like an hour.

Right: Five minutes, to four tired men, seemed like an hour.

XVII. A comma is commonly used to mark the omission of a word or words.

I must go north; you, south.

Your chief pleasure is reading; mine, writing.

EXERCISE

(Rules XII to XVII inclusive): Punctuate:

1. While we were driving through Rhode Island we were forever crossing bridges many of which must have been very old

2. I must finish the work to-night for the inspector will be here in the morning
3. When you drive the automobile runs smoothly
4. Mr. Jones who has sold us fresh vegetables for many years is going to sell his business
5. The man who sold us vegetables has failed
6. Put on any shoes that you like and come along
7. Shoot when I give the signal
8. There is the house in which I was born and in which I hope to die
9. The red-haired woman sitting opposite us is an opera singer
10. The University of Chicago which has a large graduate school attracts me
11. He will receive a good grade if he studies hard
12. If he studies hard he will receive a good grade
13. While walking through the town he turned many things over in his mind
14. We shall surely find him especially if he is looking for us
15. A theme containing two gross errors in punctuation receives an F.
16. This theme of November 6 containing two gross errors in punctuation receives an F
17. I shall use my influence against any candidate who advocates light wines and beers
18. I shall use my influence against Mr. Wall who does not advocate light wines and beers
19. The sister who lives in Peoria is married her twin who lives in Kankakee is a spinster

SPECIAL WARNING: THE COMMA FAULT

One of the most serious errors in punctuation is the placing of a comma between two independent clauses which are not connected by *and*, *or*, *but*, *for*, *neither*, *nor*. Independent clauses not connected by one of these conjunctions must be separated by heavier punctuation than a comma. If the two independent clauses are coördinate and do not violate sen-

tence unity, they should either be joined by the appropriate conjunction or separated by a semicolon. If the second clause is an afterthought, it should be preceded by a dash. If it stands in apposition to something in the first clause, it should be preceded by a dash or colon.

Wrong: The Ersatz Preussen could cope with any navy, it could outrange any cruiser and outspeed any battleship.

Right: The Ersatz Preussen could cope with any navy, for it could outrange any cruiser and outspeed any battleship.

Or

The Ersatz Preussen could cope with any navy; it could outrange any cruiser and outspeed any battleship.

Wrong: Varick will be back on the stage in a week, at least, that is what the doctors say.

Right: Varick will be back on the stage in a week—at least, that is what the doctors say.

Wrong: The confidence man had two roles, he would pretend to be a German staff officer or an Austrian archduke.

Right: The confidence man had two roles: he would pretend to be a German staff officer or an Austrian archduke.

Wrong: A genius is always an anomaly, so no definition of genius is possible.

Right: A genius is always an anomaly, and so no definition of genius is possible.

Or

A genius is always an anomaly; therefore, no definition of genius is possible.

NOTE: Apparent exceptions to this rule are parenthetical clauses attached to main clauses, and short clauses in a series between which *and* or *or* is understood. The following are correct because in the first sentence “so he said” is not really independent, and in the second sentence *and* is understood between the first two clauses.

The Law Association should act, so he said.

The professor did all he could for me, the president was friendly, but the dean was hostile to my ambitions.

EXERCISE

Correct the punctuation of these sentences by altering either the punctuation or the sentence construction:

1. "He said I had motor ataxia, what do you know about that?"
2. The speakeasy has been padlocked, so the proprietor has left town.
3. There are two well-known heroes of the Grail Quest, one of them is Perceval or Parsifal, the other is Galahad.
4. "Pass me the bread, please," snapped Christine, "haven't you any manners?"
5. The day was drawing to a close, in the west dull rain clouds piled heavily.
6. I have overdrawn my bank account, therefore, I must ask you for another check.
7. Give her my love when you see her, don't forget.
8. Joseph has been left \$35,000 by his great-uncle, at least, that is what I make of the lawyer's letter.
9. Take it or leave it, I have no interest in the matter.
10. Manufacturers and business men demand employees who know how to work, so it is well to acquire the knowledge now.

THE SEMICOLON

I. As has just been stated, "one of the most serious errors in punctuation is the placing of a comma between two independent clauses which are not connected by one of the conjunctions *and, or, but, for, neither, nor*. . . If the two independent clauses are coördinate and do not violate sentence unity, they should either be joined by the appropriate conjunction or separated by a semicolon." Note the use of the semicolon in the sentences marked *Right* above, and note these further instances:

Henry was away when Cynthia arrived; accordingly she never saw him.

There is much to be said for him; nevertheless, he squandered all his wife's money.

All was quiet in the dormitory; but for a few snores there

was no sound. (Note that *but* is here not a conjunction but a preposition meaning *except*.)

The lava rolled over the whole village; for Pietro all was lost. (Note that *for* is here a preposition.)

II. A semicolon should be used before the conjunction connecting two independent clauses if a comma would not surely mark the end of the first independent clause for the reader:

Confusing: I like spinach, lettuce, and cabbage, and even the lowly dandelion tastes good to me.

Right: I like spinach, lettuce, and cabbage; and even the lowly dandelion tastes good to me.

III. A semicolon should be used before the conjunction connecting two long independent clauses that contain comma punctuation.

When Mr. Smith, who is now our manager, came to our office, he said that he would make many changes in the filing department; but I notice that, although some things are done with more despatch, the old routine is still generally followed.

EXERCISE

Punctuate:

1. John cannot swim nevertheless we shall take him on the cruise
2. The doctor says that Mother is nearly well so I shall soon go back to college
3. My fraternity which now has thirty-five active members and which wants no more will gladly accept the regulations but some of the other fraternities I suspect will leave the association rather than limit their membership
4. He never hurt anyone's feelings therefore he was generally liked
5. Read this chapter now leave that one until to-morrow
6. That fellow over there is the headman or chief or the padre would not have sent us to interview him
7. The top of the dugout began to crumble we should have been buried in another ten seconds
8. I am not very clever at that sort of thing however I may be able to please you

THE COLON

The colon is not now used so freely as it once was. It remains, however, the preëminent mark of anticipation, of introduction.

I. Use a colon before any word or words that are formally introduced, or before long quotations.

Only two virtues interested him: love and courage.

My question is this: Where will it all end?

Proceed in this way: First, read the assigned pages rapidly; next, jot down the most important facts. . . .

Thus spake the king: "We will that all faithful retainers be handsomely rewarded."

II. A colon is properly used before specific illustrations which follow a general statement.

The members of the club were noblemen: counts, dukes, earls, and princes.

EXERCISE

Punctuate:

1. The rooms were of many shapes square rectangular oval and even circular

2. He began his speech thus Fellow citizens I call upon you to help me in this great undertaking. . . . (a long quotation)

3. You will need these tools a hammer a saw three files a chisel a large screw driver a small screw driver and a plane.

4. He put the question in this way What benefit will the common people derive from such legislation

THE QUESTION MARK

I. The question mark is exactly what its name would imply: the mark which follows a question.

Will you dance? Why not?

"Did you hear the cheering? and the stamping? and the band playing?" (The two question marks within the sentence indicate pauses in speech for emphasis.)

II. A question mark between parentheses may indicate that there is some doubt about the preceding word or phrase.

In 1223 (?) a Round Table festival was held in Cyprus.

Do not use this device to inform your reader that you are employing irony. The context should make the question mark wholly unnecessary.

Wrong: He is a brave(?) fellow.

Right: He is a brave fellow—after five highballs.

THE EXCLAMATION POINT

The exclamation point is required after an exclamation or a strong command.

Tommy, don't you put your hand in the gorilla's cage!

What a ghastly sight!

THE HYPHEN

I. Use the hyphen to connect the parts of a word carried over from one line to another. Divide according to these rules:

1. Two consonants between two vowels are regularly divided, unless they make one sound, such as *ph*, *ch*.

Right: ac-cost, em-power, dis-cover.

Wrong: typ-hoon.

2. Suffixes and prefixes are naturally split off, even though this may conflict with rule 1.

bang-ing, re-straint.

When a final consonant is doubled before a suffix, the second consonant goes with the suffix.

recur-ring.

3. One consonant or two consonants forming a single sound, when placed between two vowels, go with the second, unless the first vowel is short and stressed.

se-ries, asi-nine, beauti-fied, ac-id, sit-uate, mer-it.

II. Use the hyphen between certain compound words, particularly compound adjectives before a noun.

The eight-hour day, a well-known comedian, an ill-marked trail, a pink-eyed albino, a brutal-minded sea-captain.

Do not use the hyphen with two-syllable compound nouns, such as, *classroom*, *roommate*, *baseball*, *shortstop*. Some well-established longer nouns, such as, *seafarer*, *bookkeeping*, do not take a hyphen. In case of doubt, consult a dictionary.

THE APOSTROPHE

I. The apostrophe is used most commonly, with or without *s*, to indicate the possessive case of nouns, as shown on p. 565.

II. It is used before *s* to indicate the possessive case of impersonal or indefinite pronouns: for instance, *somebody's*, *each other's*, *anyone else's*.

Note: It should never be used with the possessive case of personal pronouns.

ours, yours, hers, theirs, its.

Distinguish clearly between the punctuation of *its*, meaning *of it*, and the punctuation of *it's*, a contraction of *it is*.

That dog doesn't know its own mind.

III. The apostrophe often indicates omission or contraction, as just noted in the case of *it's*.

That dog doesn't know it's cold.

The class of '35 is holding a reunion.

IV. The apostrophe before *s* is used regularly to indicate the plural of letters, numerals, and words thought of as words.

Loose writing is full of *and's* and *so's*.

Put down 19 and add sixteen 0's.

THE DASH

Whereas the colon is the mark of introduction or anticipation, the dash now has the special function of indicating interruptions or afterthoughts. Its use is legitimate when such interruptions or afterthoughts are deliberately used for effect, or cannot without awkwardness be worked into the normal structure of the sentence. The frequent use of the dash in formal writing today, however, is a danger signal, for it indicates a nervous state of mind and a tendency toward slipshod thinking. Its use in reporting conversation or in securing certain surprise effects is entirely proper. Whenever you wish to indicate a break in the sentence plan, use a dash.

I. Dashes are often used to set off parenthetical explanations or interruptions of thought.

Just as she opened the door—it was then almost eleven o'clock—I wrote the last word of my article.

If you go to town tomorrow—and you know you may—be sure to see my tailor.

II. Use a dash to show that a sentence is not to be brought to a normal close.

The best cigarette, in my opinion—but why should we discuss cigarettes?

III. Use a dash before an expression that is added as an afterthought.

He is a fine fellow—in some ways.

I shall come tomorrow—if not, the next day.

IV. A series of words in apposition may be set off by dashes instead of commas. This should always be done when the use of commas would introduce confusion.

Confusing: The United States, the European nations, Great Britain, France, and Italy, and Japan entered a disarmament conference.

Right: The United States, the European nations—Great Britain, France, and Italy—and Japan entered a disarmament conference.

EXERCISE

Punctuate:

1. I have heard that you don't like girls not even beautiful Helen
2. If my memory is not playing me a trick it was January that's a hot month in my country when we started for the foothills
3. I ought to give him a tip on no I must not be the cause of his going back to the track
4. She likes almost every kind of fruit apples oranges peaches bananas pears but she refuses even to taste an olive
5. Tell me Mary why will you slam that door Tom what you find so interesting in Mr. Hathaway
6. The Mississippi River with its tributaries the Missouri the Arkansas the Ohio and others a magnificent system of waterways covering more than half the United States is not used as it should be for pleasure and the transport of goods
7. Find the trapdoor or we shall never quick there it is

PARENTHESES AND BRACKETS

I. Casual interruptions of sentence structure are set off by dashes. More deliberate, formal interruptions are set off by parentheses. These marks should be used whenever necessary formal explanations cannot well be worked into the regular progress of the sentence. They are also used to enclose sentences which cannot well be omitted, but which violate the coherence or unity of the paragraph.

When Mr. Cole joined the Fabian Society (a society formed in 1883 with the aim of forwarding socialism by a Fabian policy), he quickly became a distinguished member.

The name, Mark Twain (a pseudonym adopted by Samuel Langhorne Clemens), has an interesting history.

II. Brackets should be used to enclose words or figures interpolated in a quotation, to show that they are not a part of the quotation.

Mr. Lee said, "In the spring of that year [1917] I was bound for Havre, France."

Mr. Guedalla writes, "That evening he [Prince Louis Napoleon] dined with Lady Blessington at Gore House."

QUOTATION MARKS

I. A direct quotation is enclosed within quotation marks.

John asked, "What is her telephone number?"

"Her telephone number," Edward replied, "shall be known only to me."

A quotation of more than one paragraph has quotation marks at the beginning of the quotation, at the beginning of every paragraph which begins with a quoted word, and after the last word of the quotation. Quotation marks are not used, however, after the last word of every quoted paragraph in such a series.

II. A quotation within a quotation appears between single quotation marks.

Police Sergeant Farley reported in these words: "When I saw this man, I went up to him and said, 'Where are you living now, Paul?' He replied, 'My name is not Paul, and I know of no reason for telling you where I live.' So I had to bring him here."

III. If a question mark or an exclamation point stands after the last word of a quotation, it should follow the final quotation marks if more than the quotation is a question or an exclamation. If only the quotation is a question or exclamation, the final quotation marks should follow the question mark or exclamation point.

Wrong: Mrs. Blake exclaimed, "What a frightful calamity"!

Mr. Nevins asked, "What is the price of wheat today"?

Is the title correctly given, "The Anatomy of Melancholy"?

Right: Mrs. Blake exclaimed, "What a frightful calamity!"

Mr. Nevins asked, "What is the price of wheat today?"

Is the title correctly given, "The Anatomy of Melancholy"?

IV. When a period, comma, semicolon, or colon stands at the end of a quoted passage, disregard logic. Always place the period or comma before the quotation marks. Always place the semicolon or colon after the quotation marks.

V. In quoting conversation, begin a new paragraph every time the speaker changes.

EXERCISE

Use quotation marks and other punctuation in the following:

1. If you will turn to the right when you come to Olive Street you are now on Sarah Street you will soon see the shop you are looking for

2. My father began Never had I seen such a harvest it was the autumn of 1893 in all my many years in Minnesota

3. I asked Why did the traffic officer cry out Stop your car

4. There is no necessity sobbed Helen for your being so rude to me

5. I sat quietly and said Go ahead do your worst moreover I did not even look as if I were afraid

6. Where in the world he exclaimed will you find a more likable fellow

7. John said I give you my word that I am telling the truth nevertheless I knew he was lying

8. Melvin exclaimed What a silly question Why didn't you ask Who makes it rain

9. While John was haranguing the crowd he said abruptly I must ask you good people a question How do you hope ever to improve your present condition

COMBINING PUNCTUATION

Parentheses, brackets, dashes, quotation marks, and the period after an abbreviation may be combined with other punctuation marks. But it is wrong to place the other marks—the comma, the ordinary period, the colon, the semicolon,

the exclamation point, and the question mark—next to one another. When, at the end of a quotation, more than one mark (besides the quotation mark) seems necessary, a period absorbs a comma, semicolon, or colon, and an exclamation point or question mark absorbs a period or any lesser mark.

Wrong: Did he really say "You're a boob!" ? He probably said, "You're a Reub!".

Right: Did he really say, "You're a boob"? He probably said, "You're a Reub!"

Wrong: Can you answer the following questions:?

Right: Can you answer the following questions?

Wrong: The first line read: "A secret revealed!"; the second line read: "Wouldst thou desecrate the dead?".

Right: The first line read: "A secret revealed!" the second line read: "Wouldst thou desecrate the dead?"

Right: Do you play Rimski-Korsakoff?—that is, play him feelingly?

Erase "Prof.," and write "Professor."

"Perozzi died in 1637. [The true date is 1647.] Complete obscurity surrounds the circumstances."

Can you stand the poem beginning, "Tell me not in mournful numbers"?

The elocutionist spoke feelingly the great passage in *Othello*: "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!"

III. CAPITALIZATION

Capitalization, like punctuation, is a matter in which some latitude is permissible. Some romantic people fancy the sight of capitals on the page; the newspaper compositor dodges every capital he can. One may take one's choice between "a visit to the King" and "a visit to the king"; between "capitalism" and "Capitalism." Nevertheless, certain rules are generally observed, and are stated below.

I. Capitalize the first word of :

1. A sentence.
2. Any expression not a sentence which stands by itself.
3. Any quoted sentence or expression that would begin with a capital if not quoted.
4. A quoted clause which is not fitted into the structure of the introductory clause.
5. The title of a piece of written or printed matter or piece of music.
6. The beginning of every line of verse.

1. Love is the fulfillment of the law. 2. What music! 3. She leaned over the child, saying, "Hello, little fellow!" 4. Notice what is implied: "When I come again." 5. "On the Road to Mandalay," "The Rubaiyat," and "The Golden Book" are lying on the table. The theme is entitled "A Gentleman of the Old School." 6. "The splendor falls on castle walls And snowy summits old in story."

II. Capitalize proper nouns and adjectives. This rule includes names of districts, streets, nicknames, institutions, political parties, particular buildings, historical periods or movements, and titles preceding names.

Holland, Dutch, Keokuk, Henry Harrison, South America, the Bad Lands, the Middle West, "One-Legged Pete," the Little

Corporal, the Mediæval Academy, Colorado College, the Century Club, the Democratic Party, the Chrysler Building, Secretary Hull, Colonel Frisbie, Saint Patrick.

1. When *North, Southwest, Orient*, etc., refer to particular geographical regions, they should be capitalized, but not when they refer to directions.

Mrs. Blumstein is going South for the winter.

Birds fly south in winter.

2. When honorific titles refer to particular persons, they may be capitalized; otherwise, not.

Wrong: Every President has a difficult task.

Right: When the President entered, I rose.

3. When the words *democrat, republican, socialist*, etc., refer to upholders of a democratic, republican, or socialistic form of government, they are not capitalized. But when they refer to the members of the Democratic, Republican, or Socialist Parties, they are capitalized.

Wrong: Athens was a Democratic state.

Vote the republican ticket.

Right: The Socialist candidate may be elected.

In republican Rome kings were not tolerated.

Though a millionaire, he shows a democratic spirit.

4. When words like *Father, Dad, Grandmother, Sister, Auntie* are used as names designating specific persons, they should be capitalized. Do not capitalize these words when they are used as common nouns.

Wrong: "Is your Dad at home?" "No, dad left an hour ago."

Right: "Is your dad at home?" "No, Dad left an hour ago."

5. Always capitalize names of languages.

Wrong: A knowledge of latin is a great aid in the correct spelling and writing of english.

Right: A knowledge of Latin is a great aid in the correct spelling and writing of English.

6. Words like *academy*, *high school*, *college*, *university* are capitalized only when they form part of the title of a particular institution.

Wrong: Loring went from a small rural High School to the university of Wisconsin, one of the outstanding Universities of the West.

Right: Loring went from a small rural high school to the University of Wisconsin, one of the outstanding universities of the West.

7. The words *freshman*, *junior*, etc., are not capitalized unless they form part of a title.

Wrong: There are three hundred students in the Freshman class.

Right: There are three hundred students in the freshman class.

You had better consult the Freshman Bible.

8. When *philosophy*, *biology*, *contemporary civilization*, etc., are referred to as studies, they are not capitalized. But when they form part of the title of a course, they are capitalized.

Wrong: I am enthusiastic over my Physics teacher; he teaches so much more than Physics.

Right: I find I can take Art 4 next semester.
I certainly am interested in art.

9. Do not capitalize such words as *time*, *nature*, *art*, *spring*, *winter*, unless they are imagined as persons.

Wrong: When Winter comes we begin to dream of Spring. He has an extensive knowledge of the history of Art. He has a cruel Nature.

Right: "O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being!"
When Time swings his scythe, the generations fall.
Do you believe Nature is a cruel or a benevolent goddess?

10. Capitalize all words referring to God, Christ, any particular divinity, the Bible or other sacred books, and the

parts thereof. Personal pronouns referring to God or Christ are also capitalized.

Trust in God and in His Son.

The New Testament is the better part of the Bible.

The religion of Buddha has been subjected to corrupting influences.

Note: The adjective *biblical* and common nouns such as *gods*, *deities*, are not capitalized.

III. Capitalize not only the first word, but also every word, except articles, pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions, in the title of a piece of writing, book, or musical composition.

Wrong: Have you read Anne Lindbergh's "North To The Orient"?

Right: Have you read Anne Lindbergh's "North to the Orient"?

IV. The pronoun *I*, the sign of direct address *O*, and many abbreviations such as *A.D.*, *B.C.*, *Ph.D.*, *D.Litt*, *St.*, *No.* are capitalized.

IV. DICTION AND USAGE

The words listed below are often used by careless or uneducated writers in wrong senses or in wrong constructions. Some of these words and usages are unobjectionable in conversation but jar when used in more formal contexts, and are here labeled "colloquial." Certain textbook rules not based on the practice of standard authors of the nineteenth and twentieth century are omitted.

Ad. Abbreviations like *ad*, *gym*, *prof*, *exam*, *phone*, *auto* are good colloquialisms, but are not adapted to writing.

Affect, effect. *Affect* is never anything but a verb and its most common meaning is *influence*. *Effect* as a verb means *accomplish*; as a noun, *result*.

The Nazi revolution effected a complete change.

The laboring classes were most affected.

The effect was disastrous.

Affect also means *assume*, and the past participle *affected* means *assumed*, *not natural*.

She affects the manner of a duchess.

The professor has an affected simper.

Aggravate. Means *make graver*, *make worse*. To be avoided as a synonym of *annoy* or *exasperate*.

Colloquial: She was so aggravated she said, "Damn!"

That's an aggravating noise.

Right: She was so exasperated that she said, "Damn!"

That's an irritating noise.

Reducing will only aggravate her weakness.

His terror was aggravated by a long low whistle.

Alibi. Means a "plea that when the offense was committed, the defendant was somewhere else." It does not mean an *excuse* or *defense of any kind*.

Wrong: I have a good alibi, because I have receipts for every dollar I spent.

Right: I have a good alibi, because, at the time, I was in Butte, twenty miles away.

Allude, elude. *Allude* means *refer indirectly* (to); *elude* means *avoid, escape, baffle*.

Dillinger eluded the G-men for months.

The Senator alluded to a certain notorious hypocrite, but did not mention him by name.

Allusion, illusion. An *allusion* is an *indirect reference*; an *illusion* is an *unreal image, a mistaken belief*.

World peace is an illusion.

Jones made a caustic allusion to tax scandals.

Alright. Not the accepted spelling for *all right*.

All right, meet me at ten.

Any place, every place, no place, some place. Not to be used adverbially without a preposition. Prefer *anywhere, everywhere, nowhere, somewhere*.

Vulgar: I couldn't find that check any place.

I looked every place.

I couldn't find that check no place.

I'll find that check some place.

Let's go some place and have a sundae.

Right: I couldn't find that check anywhere.

I looked everywhere.

Or

I looked in every place.

I could find that check nowhere.

Or

I couldn't find that check anywhere.

I'll find that check somewhere.

Let's go to some place where we can have a sundae.

Or

Let's go somewhere and have a sundae.

As. (1) When the conjunction *as* is ambiguous, it should give place to some other clearer word or phrase.

Ambiguous: Harriman changed his plans *as* he was leaving.

Right: Harriman changed his plans *when* he was leaving.

Harriman changed his plans *because* he was leaving.

(2) *As* meaning *for example* should usually be preceded by *such*.

Wrong: I like sports, *as* swimming, skating, and canoeing.

Right: I like sports, *such as* swimming, skating, and canoeing.

Best: I like *such* sports *as* swimming, skating, and canoeing.

Assets. Strictly correct only *as* a plural and *as* meaning the *property available to meet one's liabilities or debts*. The singular, *asset*, is used to mean a *useful quality or advantage*, but is somewhat overworked, has a commercial flavor, and is best avoided.

Wrong: The infinite mercy of God is an *asset* which all Christians count on at the Judgment Day.

Milton had one great *asset*: he was a musician.

Better: The infinite mercy of God is something that all Christians count on at the Judgment Day.

Milton possessed a valuable talent: he was a musician.

At about. Omit *at*.

Wrong: The class meeting will begin *at about* seven.

Right: The class meeting will begin *about* seven.

Auto. See *ad*.

Awful. In formal writing should be used only when it carries its original meaning, *awe-inspiring*.

Colloquial: In her old house-dress she was an *awful* sight.

Right: Niagara Falls is an *awful* sight.

Back of. A clumsy way of saying *behind*.

Awkward: In *back of* the butter factory is a garage.

Better: *Behind* the butter factory is a garage.

Balance. Is not a synonym of *rest* or *remainder*.

Wrong: Some of the girls were attractive; the balance had red finger-nails.

Right: Some of the girls were attractive; the others had red finger-nails.

Beg to state. Business jargon, rapidly becoming obsolete.

Wrong: I beg to state your favor of 20th received.

Right but antiquated: I beg leave to state that your letter of the 20th has been received.

Better: Your letter of the twentieth has been received.

Beside, besides. *Beside* is a preposition meaning *at* or *by the side of*. *Besides*, as an adverb, means *in addition*; as a preposition, *in addition to*.

Wrong: Let me lay my coat besides yours.

I have the reputation of the college to maintain, beside my own.

Right: Let me lay my coat beside yours.

I have the reputation of the college to maintain, besides my own.

Bunch. Means *cluster*. Slang for *group of persons*.

Slang: The team is a swell bunch of guys.

Colloquial: The team is a fine lot of fellows.

Right: He sent a bunch of hothouse grapes to the steamer.

But that, but what. After words of doubt, question, fear, *but what* is permissible, *but that* is correct; *that*, alone, is most logical and simple.

Colloquial: I have no doubt but what she is right.

Better: I have no doubt but that she is right.

Best: I have no doubt that she is right.

Cannot help but. An awkward mixed idiom. Use either *cannot but* or *cannot help*.

Awkward: I cannot help but laugh at Gluyas Williams.

Right: I cannot help laughing at Gluyas Williams.

Can, could; may, might. *May* and *might* are preferable expressions to indicate permission.

Colloquial: Can I borrow your pony?
The coach said I could leave early.

Right: May I borrow your pony?
The coach said I might leave early.

Capital, capitol. *Capitol* applies only to the original temple of Jupiter in Rome, or to buildings in which the national or state legislatures meet. *Capital* is a noun and adjective with various meanings, including that of the *chief city of a country or state*.

The Capitol rises at the end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Springfield is the capital of Illinois.

The interests of capital constantly conflict with those of labor.

War and Peace is a capital book.

Spell Capitol with a capital.

Censor, censure. A *censor* is a person who examines certain activities and eliminates what seems harmful to morals or dangerous to the state. His function is to censor. The noun *censure* means *rebuke*; the verb *censure* means to *rebuke*.

He is a censor for the films.

The Post Office censors all periodical literature.

The judge censured the attorney severely.

Though your censure is sharp, it is deserved.

Claim. Strictly speaking, *claim* means *demand as one's due*, but is properly extended to mean *affirm in a formal way*. It is badly overworked as a mere synonym for *say*, and nine times out of ten should be rejected in favor of *say*, *assert*, *contend*, *maintain*, *affirm*, or *proclaim*.

Wrong: He claims he found a fly in his pie.

I do not claim that he is a snob; he's only reserved.

Some people claim that this country is going to the dogs.

Right: He says he found a fly in his pie.

I do not assert that he is a snob; he's only reserved.

Captain Cook claimed that he had discovered the North Pole.

Peary claimed that Cook was an impostor.

Some people contend that this country is going to the dogs.

This company claims that its products are pure.

Completed. A vulgarism; *complexioned* is clumsy.

Wrong: Do you like dark-completed girls?

Better, but clumsy: Do you like dark-complexioned girls?

Best: Do you like girls with a dark complexion?

Considerable. An adjective, never an adverb or noun.

Wrong: That hurt me considerable.

Jenkins lost considerable in the crash.

Right: That hurt me considerably.

Jenkins lost a considerable sum in the crash.

Contact. In literary use, a noun, not a verb.

Wrong: Craigie contacted the kidnappers.

When I get to town, I'll contact Mrs. Bolger.

Right: Craigie established contact with the kidnappers.

When I get to town, I'll communicate with (or see) Mrs. Bolger.

Continual, continuous. If an action is *continuous*, it never stops; if it is *continual*, it goes on for some time but stops intermittently or occasionally.

He drove the car continuously all night.

I continually asked him to let me relieve him.

Council, counsel. A *council* is a deliberative assembly; *counsel* is deliberation (e.g., take counsel), advice, or a legal adviser.

Why should I go to him for counsel?

The student council met today.

Credible, creditable, credulous. *Credible* means *believable*; *credulous* means *too ready to believe, gullible*; *creditable* means *conferring credit, praiseworthy*.

Your story is credible.
 Your performance was most creditable to your training.
 She is altogether too credulous of the newspapers.

Cute. Reeks of feminine sentimentality. The word should be used only when one wishes to be deliberately sentimental or satirical.

Ridiculous: Isn't oo a cute 'ittle sing!
 Nearly as bad: That hat looks mighty cute on you, Pearl.
 That ring is too cute for words!

Note that there are such words as *cunning*, *piquant*, *dashing*, *becoming* in the English language.

Data. A plural noun. Preferable pronunciation *dayta*.

Wrong: This data is unreliable.
 Right: These data are unreliable.

Describe. Not to be used loosely for *narrate* or *explain*.

Inaccurate: Let me describe what happened.
 Let me describe how the tractor works.
 Right: Let me tell (or narrate) what happened.
 Let me explain how the tractor works.
 Let me describe a blue heron.

Differ with, differ from. The first means to *disagree in opinion*; the second, *to be different*.

Wrong: I differ from you about communism.
 Right: I differ with you about communism.
 My explanation differs from yours in several respects.

Different than. After *different* American idiom prefers *from*, not *than*.

Colloquial: The college is very different than it used to be.
 Right: The college is very different from what it used to be.

Discomfit, discomfort, discomfiture. *Discomfit*, a verb, means *defeat, disconcert*; *discomfiture* is the corresponding noun. Neither has any connection with *discomfort*, which means *lack of comfort, physical annoyance*.

Wrong: When the cheating was discovered, Harry was dis-comforted.

Do you feel any discomfiture when you sleep on the floor?

Right: When the cheating was discovered, Harry was dis-comfited.

Do you feel any discomfort when you sleep on the floor?

Disinterested, uninterested. Uninterested means *lacking in attention, unexcited. Disinterested* means *free from monetary or other selfish bias.*

Wrong: I won't buy the book; I am disinterested in the subject.

Can you find an uninterested senator to head the committee?

Right: I won't buy the book; I am not interested in the subject.

Can you find a disinterested senator to head the committee?

I am immensely interested in the case, but I am quite disinterested.

Dominate, domineer. Dominate means *control* and takes a direct object. *Domineer* means *rule insolently* and is followed by *over*.

Wrong: Don't you dare dominate over me!

Since 1588 England has domineered the seas.

Right: Don't you dare domineer over me!

Since 1588 England has dominated the seas.

Dove. As preterit of *dive*, *dived* is preferable.

Permissible: He dove between the policeman's legs and escaped.

Better: He dived between the policeman's legs and escaped.

Due to. Careful writers always use *due* as an adjective modifying a noun or pronoun. As a phrasal preposition, *because of* or *owing to* is preferable.

Permissible: Due to the heavy rains the dam burst.

Preferable: Owing to the heavy rains the dam burst.

Either . . . or, neither . . . nor. To be used of only two.

Wrong: I can read neither Cowper, Crabbe, nor Thomson.

Right: I cannot read Cowper, Crabbe, or Thomson.

I can read neither novels nor short stories.

Enormity. Means the *abnormal gravity of a misdeed*. *Enormousness* is the more accurate word for *abnormal size*, but is clumsy and therefore best avoided.

Wrong: The fat lady at the circus is a specimen of enormity.

Right but clumsy: The fat lady at the circus is a specimen of enormousness.

Right: The fat lady at the circus is a specimen of obesity.

It is an enormity to torture Jews for being Jews.

Enthuse: Colloquial for *be, become, or make enthusiastic*.

Colloquial: When she saw Percy's smile, she enthused.

Nobody can enthuse an audience like Congressman Hourigan.

Correct: When she saw Percy's smile, she grew enthusiastic.

Nobody can bring an audience to its feet like Congressman Hourigan.

Equally as. A clumsy pleonasm. Use either *equally* or *as* according to the context.

Wrong: This administration is equally as good.

She is equally as beautiful as her sister.

Right: This administration is equally good.

She is as beautiful as her sister.

Etc. An abbreviation for the Latin *et cetera*, which means *and other things*. Never write *and etc.* Do not use this abbreviation in narrative or description since it is prosaic and practical; or after a list beginning with *such as, like, for example*, since it is then redundant.

Wrong: He deals in hides, furs, and etc.

The sea was a pattern of rippling colors, slate-blue, orange, etc.

Simon admires novels like *Barchester Towers*, *Middlemarch*, etc.

Right: He deals in hides, furs, etc.

The sea was a pattern of rippling colors—slate-blue, orange, and lilac.

Simon admires novels like *Barchester Towers* and *Middlemarch*.

Every place. See *any place*.

Expect. Means *look forward to*, not *suppose* or *intend*.

Wrong: I expect he has left town.

I expect to do all I can.

Right: I suppose he has left town.

I intend to do all I can.

Factor. Means *one of the elements in a situation which produces a result*. Not a synonym of *feature*.

Wrong: Light and air are important factors in a school building.

Right: Light and air are important features in a school building.

Light and air are important factors in keeping and improving health.

Fine. A colloquial term of approval. Substitute a more specific adjective, unless you mean *delicate*, *refined*, *not coarse*.

Colloquial: Feeling fine; a fine flower bed; a fine shot.

Better: Feeling well; a gay (luxuriant, well-tended, etc.) flower bed; a well-aimed shot.

Former, latter. These words are somewhat formal and practical in connotation and should be avoided in emotional or descriptive writing.

Wrong: Rachel's hair was a burnished copper, her eyes a startling blue. The former, added to the latter, attracted me irresistibly.

Note that these words are applicable only when two nouns have been mentioned.

Wrong: We are scheduled to play Brown, Michigan, and Ohio State, but the former has been obliged to cancel the game.

Right: We are scheduled to play Brown, Michigan, and Ohio State, but the first of these has been obliged to cancel the game.

Funny. Does not mean *queer, strange*; but *amusing, humorous*.

Colloquial: It's funny, but there are no fingerprints on the stiletto.

Right: It's strange, but there are no fingerprints on the stiletto.

George's stories are not merely funny; they make you roll on the floor.

Good. Not an adverb or a synonym for *healthy, full of life*.

Wrong: I ran the farm pretty good.
After a cold shower I feel good.

Right: I ran the farm pretty well.
After a cold shower I feel exhilarated.

Got. *Have got* is usually a clumsy colloquialism for *have, possess*. Correctly used, it means *have obtained*, and the preferable form in this sense is *gotten*.

Colloquial: I have got an interesting novel at home.

Right: I have an interesting novel at home.
I have gotten an interesting novel from the library every week since Christmas.

Gym. See *ad*.

Hardly, scarcely. Not to be used with a negative.

Wrong: The knife isn't hardly sharp enough.
We couldn't scarcely see, it was so dark.

Right: The knife is hardly sharp enough.
We could scarcely see, it was so dark.

Home. Beware of using *home* in contexts which suggest the realtor's or crooner's jargon.

Wrong: Across the river they saw many stately homes.

Right: Across the river they saw many stately houses.

Homey. If *Homey* suggests the kind of home you'd like to escape from, don't use the word to suggest the kind of home you'd like to create. Substitute *homelike*.

Hung, hanged. The past tense and past participle of *hang*, when it means *execute by hanging*, are both *hanged*; in all other senses, the correct form is *hung*.

Wrong: The lynchers hung the suspected negro.

Right: The lynchers hanged the suspected negro.

The prettiest baubles were hung at the top.

Husky. Colloquial, except in the sense of *hoarse* or a *sledge dog*.

Colloquial: Buster gets huskier every year.

Right: His voice is huskier tonight.

Two huskies were exhibited at the dog show.

In order for. Unsanctioned idiom. Substitute *in order that* or *in order to*.

Wrong: The ladder was set in order for him to escape.

Right: The ladder was set in order that he might escape.

The ladder was set in order to permit his escape.

Individual. Carelessly used as synonym for *person*. Properly used only when a person is contrasted with a group.

Wrong: What a pleasant individual Mr. Loring is!

Right: What a pleasant person Mr. Loring is!

As an individual Mr. Loring is kindhearted, but as a member of the corporation he is as hard as the rest.

Infer, imply. *Imply* means *suggest* or *hint* an unexpressed meaning. *Infer* means *gather* an implied meaning.

Wrong: Parsons inferred much more than he actually said.

Right: Parsons implied much more than he actually said.
 I inferred from what Parsons said that he had a well-planned scheme.
 An astronomer infers the distance of the nebulae from his observations of their spectroscopes.

Ingenious, ingenuous. Ingenious means resourceful, clever; ingenuous means frank, unsuspicious, and sometimes naïve.

Only an ingenious man would have guessed the answer.

One can be too ingenuous; one does not have to reveal all his blunders.

Inside of. An awkward phrasal preposition. Omit *of*, or when speaking of time, substitute *within* or *in less than*.

Wrong: Inside of the gates there is a lodge.
 I covered ninety miles inside of an hour.
 The theatre will close inside of a month.

Right: Inside the gates there is a lodge.
 I covered ninety miles in an hour.
 The theatre will close within a month.
 The inside (*noun*) of the cup is clean.

Kind of. Colloquial for *rather, somewhat*.

Colloquial: He seems kind of finical.

Right: He seems rather finical.

Kind of a. Colloquial and slightly awkward for *kind of*, meaning *sort of*.

Colloquial: That's the kind of a man Heller is.

Better: That's the kind of man Heller is.

Lay, lie. Lie, in the sense of *recline* or *be in an extended position*, never takes an object and has for past tense *lay*, and for past participle *lain*. *Lay*, in the sense of *cause to lie, place*, always takes an object, except in the special sense of *laying eggs*, when the object is sometimes understood. The past tense and past participle are *laid*.

Wrong: I laid in bed all day.

Right: I lay in bed all day.

Wrong: I have laid in bed all day.

Right: I have lain in bed all day.

Wrong: I like to lay in bed.

Right: I like to lie in bed.

Liable, likely, apt. *Liable* means either *legally responsible* or *exposed to an unpleasant or harmful contingency*. *Likely* means *probable*. As an adverb meaning *probably*, it is not to be used without *very*, *quite* or *most*. *Apt* means *suitable* or *having a tendency*.

Wrong: Your candidate is liable to be elected.

Colloquial: Your candidate will likely be elected.

Your candidate is apt to be elected.

Right: Your candidate is likely to be elected.

You candidate will probably be elected.

Very likely your candidate will be elected.

He is an apt candidate for an asylum.

He is apt to lose his temper.

Jones is liable to be sent to an asylum.

Like. Should not be used as a conjunction, followed by a subject and verb. It is correct when used as a preposition with object. Where uneducated usage employs *like* as a conjunction, learn to use *as*, *as if*, or *such as*, according to the context.

Wrong: You look like you was peeved.

Like I was saying, I always chew Wrigley's.

Charlie talks like he was off his bean.

She gave him a dirty look like he won't soon forget.

Bud don't act like he used to.

Right: You look as if you were annoyed.

You look like an actor.

As I was saying, I always choose a minute steak.

Charlie talks as if he were out of his mind.

Charlie talks like a lunatic.

She gave him a venomous look such as he won't soon forget.

Bud doesn't act like his old self.
 Bud doesn't act as he used to.

Line. Is a much overworked word in these days. Avoid it when you can find a more accurate word.

Colloquial: His line is selling insurance.
 What line is he in?
 Show me something in the neckwear line.
 I have read a good deal in the line of aeronautics.
 Bob has a good line.

Right: His occupation is selling insurance.
 What business is he in?
 Show me some ties.
 I have read a good deal about aeronautics.
 Bob is an entertaining talker.

Loan. Should be used as verb or noun only in connection with large or formal transactions. Otherwise use *lend*.

Wrong: Loan me a nickel, will you?
 He made me a loan of his tennis racket.
 Right: Lend me a nickel, will you?
 He lent me his tennis racket.
 The bank loaned him five hundred dollars.

Locate. Not a synonym for *settle* or *remember*.

Wrong: Haskins was the first to locate here.
 I can't seem to locate when I saw him.
 Right: Haskins was the first to settle here.
 I seem unable to remember when I saw him.

Luxuriant, luxurious. *Luxuriant* usually means *of abundant growth*; *luxurious* means *fond of or contributing to luxury*.

Wrong: The grand-duke wore side-whiskers, luxurious, auburn-colored, scented.
 He led a luxuriant life in a Manhattan penthouse.
 Right: The grand-duke wore side-whiskers, luxuriant, auburn-colored, scented.
 He led a luxurious life in a Manhattan penthouse.

Mad. Means *insane*.

Colloquial: He was as mad as a hornet.

Right: He was as angry as a hornet.
He was as mad as a March hare.

Meet up with. Omit *up*, or *up with*.

Wrong: Prothero is the sanest man I ever met up with.

Right: Prothero is the sanest man I ever met (or met with).

Mighty. Not a synonym of *very*.

Colloquial: The practice was mighty strenuous.

Right: The practice was very strenuous.

Most. Does not mean *almost*, *nearly*.

Wrong: Most everybody was drunk, and I most decided to call a policeman.

Right: Almost everybody was drunk, and I nearly decided to call a policeman.

Mutual. Means *reciprocal* and should be carefully distinguished from *common*. If two persons have a mutual hatred, they hate each other; if they have a common hatred, they both hate someone else. One exception, however, the phrase "mutual friend," is now in general use as meaning a *friend in common*.

Wrong: Morris and Burne-Jones had a mutual admiration for Rossetti.

Right: Morris and Burne-Jones had a common admiration for Rossetti.

Morris and Burne-Jones had a mutual devotion to each other.

Myself, ourselves. Colloquial as subjects of a verb.

Wrong: The quarterback and myself were dropped from the team.

Right: The quarterback and I were dropped from the team.

Near-by. Colloquial. It is better to follow the noun with the two words *near by*.

Colloquial: They carried her into a large near-by drugstore.

Better: They carried her into a large drugstore near by.

Nice. Colloquial for *pleasant*, *agreeable*, and a dozen other meanings. Prefer a specific word. Properly used, *nice* means *fastidious*, *precise*.

Colloquial: She was the nicest old lady.

Those are nice plus-fours.

Better: She was the kindest (or most warm-hearted, most amusing, etc.) old lady.

Those are natty plus-fours.

Helen has a nice taste in Japanese prints.

Notorious, *notable*, *noteworthy*. *Notorious* does not mean *famous*, but *infamous*. *Notable* and *noteworthy* mean *worthy of note*, *remarkable*.

Wrong: The Declaration of Independence is a notorious document.

Right: The Declaration of Independence is a famous (or notable or noteworthy) document.

Off of. Omit the *of*.

Colloquial: The car plunged off of the bridge.

Right: The car plunged off the bridge.

Only. (1) Watch carefully the position of *only* to see that it modifies the right word; otherwise you may be ambiguous or wholly misleading. Note the difference in meaning between: Father only lent Sis the money (that is, he did not give it to her), and, Father lent only Sis five dollars (that is, to no one else in the family), and Father lent Sis only five dollars (that is, he lent no more).

Colloquial: The Ethiopians only have a few machine-guns.

I have been only suffering from cancer two months.

Right: The Ethiopians have only a few machine-guns.

I have been suffering from cancer only two months.

Only. (2) Colloquial as a conjunction meaning *but*.

Colloquial: I know he is bluffing, only I don't dare say so.

Right: I know he is bluffing, but I don't dare say so.

Ought. *Had ought* and *hadn't ought* are clumsy and incorrect expressions for *ought* and *ought not*.

Wrong: They had ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Right: They ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Outside of. Not to be used for *outside*, *aside from*, *except for*.

Colloquial: The assassin was lounging just outside of the door.
Outside of his twitching eyebrows, there was no sign of nervousness.

Right: The assassin was lounging just outside the door.
Aside from (or except for) his twitching eyebrows, there was no sign of nervousness.

Overly. Used by persons who do not know that *over* is correctly used as a prefix to modify adjectives (as well as nouns).

Wrong: There is such a thing as being overly indulgent.

Right: There is such a thing as being overindulgent.
There is such a thing as overindulgence.

Partake of, participate in. *Partake of* means *take in company with others* (food or drink), or, more rarely, *smack of* (a quality). *Participate in* means *take a part in* (an activity).

Wrong: So shy was he that he never partook of any sport.

Right: So shy was he that he never participated in any sport.
My guests partook liberally of my hospitality.

Party. Does not mean *person*, except in legal and telephonic language.

Wrong: A certain party, who shall be nameless, defaulted.

Right: A certain person, who shall be nameless, defaulted.

Pass out. Slang in the sense of *faint*.

Wrong: I nearly passed out when I heard her sing.

Right: I nearly fainted when I heard her sing.

Peeved. Slang. *Peevish* is in good use.

Wrong: The colonel was peeved when I failed to salute.

Right: The colonel was annoyed when I failed to salute.
Marcia has a peevish disposition.

Pep, peppy. Slang. Substitute *vigor, zest, energy, gaiety, spirit, vivacity, vitality, force, fire, or animation*, and corresponding adjectives.

Wrong: Put a little more pep into that sonnet.
That was a peppy speech.

Right: Put a little more vigor into that sonnet.
That was an animated speech.

Place. See *Any place*.

Plenty. To be used only as a noun.

Wrong: My town is plenty big enough for me.
Peaches are plenty this year.
We were beaten plenty.

Right: My town is quite big enough for me.
Peaches are plentiful this year.
We were beaten severely.
There is plenty of honey in the pantry.

Portray. Means *depict*, by any method, an image, an emotion, a scene. Should not be used as a synonym of *narrate* or *explain*.

Wrong: Gibbon portrays the reasons for the downfall of Rome.
Stevenson portrays the adventures of David Balfour.

Right: Gibbon explains the reasons for the downfall of Rome.
Stevenson narrates the adventures of David Balfour.
Words cannot portray the beauty of that tropic island.
Wagner's "Good Friday Spell" portrays a mood of resignation.

Practicable, practical. *Practicable* means *capable of being put in practice*; *practical* means *concerned with practice* (rather than theory).

Wrong: Henry is too practicable to be interested in pure mathematics.

That plan isn't practical. It won't work at all.

Right: Henry is too practical to be interested in pure mathematics.

That plan isn't practicable. It won't work at all.

Principle, principal. *Principle* is always a noun, and usually means *underlying law* or *guiding rule*. *Principal*, with the same pronunciation, may be either adjective or noun, and has various meanings, including *chief* and *chief person*.

The principal of the school was a politician.

My principal objection is the cost.

His success is due solely to high principle.

From these accepted principles certain corollaries may be drawn.

Proposition. Business jargon for *plan* or *undertaking*. Correct in the sense of *something formally stated for debate or demonstration*, or of *something formally proposed*. A *proposal* is *something proposed either formally or informally*.

Wrong: That's not a paying proposition.

Right: That's not a paying plan (business, enterprise).

The ambassador would not listen to the spy's proposal.

I won't dispute the proposition that we should join the League of Nations.

Euclid's fifth proposition is called the *pons asinorum*.

Put across, put over. Slang.

Wrong: I couldn't put my scheme across.

He put over his ideas on the council.

He's putting something over on you.

Right: I couldn't carry out my scheme.

He imposed his ideas on the council.

He's pulling the wool over your eyes.

Quite. Means *entirely*. Colloquial for *rather*, *somewhat*, *moderately*, *fairly*.

Colloquial: That's quite good; it deserves a B.

Right: That's rather good; it deserves a B.
His cold is quite cured.

Quite some. A mixed idiom. Use *quite a*, or, in certain cases, *some*.

Wrong: That chemical has quite some smell.
We waited quite some time for the train.

Right: That chemical has quite a smell.
We waited some time for the train.

Raise. (1) Should not be used intransitively in the sense of *rise* or *be raised*.

Wrong: When the time is up, the cutlets raise automatically at an angle.

Right: When the time is up, the cutlets rise (or are raised) automatically at an angle.

Raise. (2) In the sense of *breed* or *bring up* may be applied to chickens, hogs, etc., but not to children.

Wrong: Tim was raised on a farm.

Right: Tim was brought up (or reared) on a farm.

Real. Like *mighty*, should not be used as an adverb.

Wrong: St. Louis has a real good nine.

Right: St. Louis has a really good nine.

Reckon. Correctly used only in the sense of *calculate*.

Colloquial: I reckon you're right.

Right: I believe you're right.
I reckoned (that is, figured it out) that I could reach Des Moines by ten.

Regards. *As regards* is correct; so also is *in regard to*. *In regards to* is wrong.

Wrong: In regards to your letter permit me to state . . .

Right: In regard to your letter, let me say . . .
As regards your letter, let me say . . .

Reverend. In a title must always be followed by *Mr.*, and should be preceded by *the*.

Wrong: Rev. Wallace led in prayer.

Right: The Rev. Mr. Wallace led in prayer.

Ruination. Colloquial or humorous for *ruin*.

Wrong: This scandal will be the ruination of our dear old Alma Mater.

Right: This scandal will be the ruin of our dear old Alma Mater.

Same. Except in legal language, should not be used to do the work of personal pronouns.

Wrong: If you will lend me your running pants, I will return same tomorrow.

Right: If you will lend me your running pants, I will return them tomorrow.

School. Provincial in the sense of *college* or *university*, but correct as applied to divisions of a university.

Wrong: Ohio State is an excellent school.
He has never been back to school since he graduated with a *cum laude*.

Right: Ohio State is an excellent university.
He has never been back to college since he graduated with a *cum laude*.
He expects to enter the graduate school.

Sense. As a verb, should be used to express only subtle intuitions or inferences; it is not a synonym of *feel*, *understand*, *perceive*.

Wrong: When I put my foot in the water, I sensed a shock.

Right: When I put my foot in the water, I felt a shock.
The moment I set my eyes on him I sensed an enemy.

Set, sit. *Sit* is usually intransitive and does not take an object, but sometimes takes a reflexive object, as, for instance: He sat himself down. *Set* is transitive and takes

an object, except in the case of the sun, jelly, mortar, hens, etc.

Wrong: His mother-in-law was setting near him.
The house sets back from the road.

Right: His mother-in-law was sitting near him.
The house sits back from the road.

Shape. Colloquial for *condition, state*.

Colloquial: Did you leave your family in good shape?

Right: Did you leave your family happy and well?

Snappy. Colloquial.

Colloquial: That's a snappy-looking tie.
She made a snappy get-away.

Right: That's a handsome tie.
She made a quick escape.

So. Should not be used without *that* to introduce a clause of purpose.

Wrong: He flattered me so he could swindle me.

Right: He flattered me so that he could swindle me.

So, such. Colloquial for *very, surpassingly*, or other intensives.

Colloquial: Lucia is so beautiful!
Lucia is such a sweet creature!

Right: Lucia is surpassingly beautiful;
Lucia is a sweet creature!

Some. Slang when used in the sense of *remarkable, excellent*, etc.

Wrong: He's some pitcher.
That was some accident.

Right: He's a remarkable pitcher.
That was an appalling accident.

Specie, species. *Specie* means metal coin and has no plural. *Species* means *class*, and is both the singular and the plural form.

Wrong: To what specie does that pup belong?

Right: To what species does that pup belong?

I like all species of dogs.

They would not accept paper money and demanded specie.

Spell. Correct in the sense of a *turn of work*, but colloquial in the sense of a *short time*.

Colloquial: I think I'll sleep for a spell.

Right: I think I'll sleep for a while.

Jake turned the grindstone for a spell.

State. Formal or pompous for *say* or *tell*.

Wrong: He stated that he deserved an A.

Right: He said that he deserved an A.

Suspicion. Not a verb, but a noun.

Wrong: The detective suspicioned that the nose was false.

Right: The detective suspected that the nose was false.

Swell. Slang for *exciting*, *excellent*, *delightful*, etc.

Wrong: Our class held a swell banquet.

Right: Our class held a successful banquet.

These kind, those kind. Bad grammar for *this kind* and *that kind*.

Wrong: What do you think of these kind of cigarettes?

Right: What do you think of this kind of cigarette?

Tortuous. Means *winding* or, figuratively, *indirect*, *devious*. It has no connection in meaning with *torture*, and there is no such word as *torturous*.

Wrong: The heat was absolutely torturous.

Right: The heat was a torture (was torturing).

The path was tortuous.

His tortuous intrigues were discovered.

Transpire. Means *become known*; it does not mean *happen*.

Wrong: The gas attack transpired at dawn.

Right: What Hearst said to Hitler has not transpired.

Treat. Takes a direct object, though occasionally used with *of*.

Wrong: The lecturer treated on socialism in Mexico.

Right: The lecturer treated socialism in Mexico.

Chapter XI treats of the therapeutic value of radium.

Unique. Means *unmatched, unapproached in its kind*, and should not be restricted or modified.

Wrong: He is a rather unique scoundrel.

I had a most unique experience.

Right: He is a rare type of scoundrel.

I had a unique experience.

Very. Should not be used with a past participle, except when the participle has developed into an adjective, such as *tired, drunk, agéd*.

Wrong: The dean was very amused at my joke.

Right: The dean was much amused at my joke.

Way. Colloquial for *condition* or for *away*.

Colloquial: The bank is in a bad way.

Its stock has gone way down.

Right: The bank is in a bad state.

Its stock has gone away down.

Ways. Should not be used as a singular meaning *distance*.

Wrong: Can I walk a little ways with you, Miss Bowen?

Right: May I walk a little way with you, Miss Bowen?

Weird. Means *uncanny*, not merely *odd* or *queer*.

Wrong: He was wearing the weirdest tie.

Right: He was wearing the oddest tie.

I heard the weird hooting of an owl across the valley.

Worth-while. As a compound adjective placed before a noun, *worth-while* is an awkward, vague, and pretentious neologism. Substitute a smoother, more specific word.

Wrong: Geology 6 is a worth-while course.

All worth-while mothers know that motherhood pays.

The *Golden Treasury* is full of worth-while lyrics.

A filling station is a worth-while proposition.

Right: Geology 6 is a profitable course.

All conscientious mothers know that motherhood pays.

The *Golden Treasury* is full of exquisite lyrics.

A filling station is a paying venture.

Worth while. These two words, used in the predicate to mean *worth the time one spends*, are of course irreproachable. An awkward and often inaccurate phrase occurs when a gerund is added; then it is best to omit the *while*.

Wrong: That book is not worth while buying.

Right: That book is not worth buying.

Reading such trash is not worth while.

Would of. Mistake for *would have*.

Wrong: Our team would of scored if Ben had not fouled.

Right: Our team would have scored if Ben had not fouled.

Yell. Has only two correct meanings: (1) a *wild cry*; (2) a *school or college cheer*. It does not mean a mere *shout*, or *cry*.

Wrong: The baby was yelling all night.

Jim yelled to me, "You're all wet."

Right: The baby was screaming all night.

Jim shouted to me, "You're all wet!"

When I sprained my ankle, I yelled with pain.

The yells of the Iroquois made his blood curdle.

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

- Abbreviations, punctuation, 592;
capitalization, 615
- Abstract words, 66, 433
- Adjective, after *look, feel*, etc., 586
- Adverb, placing, 588, 632; wrong
use of *good, sure*, etc., 587
- Ambiguous, words, 71 f., 292 ff;
constructions, 105
- Analogy, argument from, 315 ff.
- Analysis, in exposition, 10, 25 f.; in
character sketch, 449 f.
- Analytical outline, 210 ff.
- And which, and who*, 115 f., 589
- Apostrophe, 606
- Argument, Chap. IX, X; *see* Brief,
Fallacies, Introduction, Issues,
Proposition
- Article or report, Chap. VII
- As*, case of pronoun after, 573;
ambiguous, 618; for *such as*, 618
- Assumption, fallacy of general,
300 ff.
- Autobiographic narrative, Chap.
XIII
- Balance, lack of, 115 ff.; structure,
145 ff.
- Bibliography, 194 ff., 346
- Bloated style, 122 f.
- Brackets, 608
- Brief, 355 ff.; rules, 358 ff.; speci-
men, 361 ff.
- Broken-backed sentence, 119 f.
- Capitalization, 612 ff.
- Case, of pronouns, 572 ff.; posses-
sive, 565; double use, 590
- Cause, fallacy of mistaken or con-
fused, 323 ff.
- Character sketch, Chap. XII; in
story, 501 ff.
- Charm of style, 141, 245 ff.
- Choice of words, Chap. III, espe-
cially, 65 ff.
- Clarity, 18, 23, 28, 30 ff.
- Classification, 10 f.
- Clauses, punctuation of, nonrestric-
tive, 598; coördinate, 596 f.,
600 ff.; dependent, 597
- Coherence, 31; in sentence, 102 ff.;
in paragraph, 159 ff.; in article,
221 ff.; in argument, 371
- Colon, 604
- Color, use in description, 394 ff.
- Comma, with interjections, 592;
with vocative, 593; in addresses
or dates, 593; with parenthetic
expressions, 593; with absolute
constructions, 593; with apposi-
tives, 593; introducing quota-
tions, 594; with a series, 594 f.;
with *or*, 595; with adjectives,
595; between clauses, 596 f.; with
nonrestrictive modifiers, 597 f.;
with conjunctive adverbs, 598 f.;
indicating omissions, 599
- Comma fault, 600 ff.
- Complex sentence, 137
- Compound sentence, 137
- Conclusion, of exposition, 28 f.; of
sentences, 124 f., 434 f.; of para-
graphs, 178 ff.; of research arti-
cle, 224; of argument, 292, 372 f.;
of narrative, 485, 500
- Concrete words, 66, 433
- Conjunctions, placing of correla-
tive, 116 f.; coöordinating, 589;
coherence, 163

- Connotation, 50 f., 68, 431
 Controlling purpose, in article, 202 ff.
 Cyclopedias, 196
 Dangling, participle, 110 f., 584; gerund, 111 f., 584 f.
 Dash, 607
 Definition, Chap. IV; model definitions, 87 ff.
 Description, Chap. XI; redefinition of, 17; use in exposition, 29, 218; in essay, 254; in character sketch, 440 ff.; relation to narrative, 469 ff.; in story, 526 ff.
 Dialog, 208, 444, 531 ff.; paragraphing of, 151
 Diction, Chap. III; common errors in diction alphabetized, 616-41
 Dictionaries, 57 ff., 71 f.
 Dodging issue, fallacy of, 308 ff.
Don't, after *he* or *she*, 576
 Double use of words, incorrect, 590
Each, either, number of, 570
 Elliptical clauses, dangling, 112, 585
 Emphasis, in sentences, 122 ff., 142 ff.; in paragraphs, 173 ff.; in article, 223; in argument, 292, 368 f.
 Essay, informal, Chap. VIII. Models, 262 ff.
 Etymology, 47 ff., 59 ff., 84 f.
 Evidence, testimonial, 332 ff., 347 ff., 356 f.
 Exclamation point, 605
 Experience as basis for writing, 7 f., 393 ff., 434, 493 ff.
 Explanations, *see* Exposition
 Exposition, simple, 16 ff.; defined, 17
 Fallacies, 290 ff.
 Figures of speech, *see* Metaphor, Rhetorical Question, Simile
 Footnotes, form of, 225 f.
 Force in words, 47 f., 51, 67
 Generalities, in characterization, 456
 Generalization, fallacy of hasty, 318 ff.
 Gerund (verbal noun), dangling, 111 f., 584 f.
 Hackneyed phrasing, 52, 63, 67, 171 f., 429 f.
 Honesty, 12 f., 57, 207 f., 220
 Humor, 218, 245, 366
 Hyphen, 605
 Ignoring alternatives, fallacy of, 312 ff., 328
 Imagination, in writing, 389 ff., 493 f.
 Infinitive, case of subject, 572; split, 582; dangling, 582
 Introduction, to simple exposition, 20 ff.; to article, 216; to argument, 366 ff.; to autobiographic narrative, 484
 Investigation, for article, 194 ff.; for argument, 346 ff.
 Issues, in argument, 350 ff.; 357. *See* Dodging
 Latin, influence of, 48 f., 53 f.
 Library, *see* Investigation
 Limping sentence, 124 ff.
 Lopsided sentence, 115 ff.
 Loose, connectives in sentence, 103 ff.; construction, 105; *see* Reference
 Loose terms, needing definition, 71 ff.; methods of defining, 73 ff.; fallacy of, 292 ff.
 Metaphor, 60, 63 f., 433, 435
 Mode of verb, 581
 Narration, defined, 469 ff.; autobiographical, Chap. XIII; short story, Chap. XIV

- Note-taking, for article, 205 ff.; for argument, 347 ff.
- Nouns, 565 ff.; possessive case, 565; irregular plurals, 566; number of collective, 575
- Order of topics, in exposition, 27, 210 f.; in paragraphs, 160 f., 178 f.; in argument, 342 f., 369 f.; in description, 423 ff.
- Outlining, 210 ff.
- Overlapping topics, 26, 212
- Paragraphs, Chap. VI; nature of, 150 f.; length of, 151 ff.; unity, 154 ff.; coherence, 159 ff.; emphasis, 173 ff.; methods of development, 185 ff.
- Parallelism, 145 ff., 166 ff.; faulty, 115 ff.
- Parentheses, 608
- Parenthetical expressions, 573; comma with, 593
- Participial phrase, not sentence, 96; weak conclusion to sentence, 125 f.
- Participle, defined, 583; dangling or misplaced, 110 f., 584
- Pathetic fallacy, 259
- Period fault, 592
- Periodic sentence, 142 f.
- Personification, 432 f.
- Placing words, to maintain coherence, 165 ff.; to maintain parallelism, 117; to secure emphasis, 124 f.; adverbs like *only*, *almost*, 588, 632
- Plagiarism, 13, 57, 207, 220
- Planning, short exposition, 20 f.; long article, 202, 210; argument, 342 f., 350 ff., 368; description, 423 f.; autobiography, 483; story, 499 ff., 512 ff., 533 f.
- Plot of story, 499
- Plural of nouns, 566
- Possessive case, 565
- Pretentious style, 67, 122 f., 241, 430 f.
- Pronouns, antecedent, 113, 567 f.; agreement with, 569, 576; *each*, *either*, 570; case of, 572 ff.
- Pronunciation, 59
- Proportion, in exposition, 20, 25, 27 f., 214; in argument, 369; in story, 522 ff.
- Proposition in argument, 345
- Punctuation, 592 ff.
- Question mark, 604 f.; in combination, 609, 611
- Quotation, 208 ff., 218, 220; in argument, 343, 347 ff., 372; punctuation of, 609 ff.
- Reading, necessity for, 6 ff., 55 f., 68 f.; enjoyment of, 391, 475 f.
- Reference, loose, of pronouns, 113, 567 f.; placing words of, 165 ff.; works of, 195 ff., 348
- Refutation of fallacies, 291 ff.; of questionable statements, 333 ff.; of long arguments, 342; briefing, 360
- Repetition for emphasis, 176 ff.
- Revision, 30 f., 224
- Rhetorical question, 370 f.
- Semicolon, 602 f.
- Sentences. Chap. V; defective, 95 ff.; variety, 136 ff.; effective, 141 ff.
- Shall*, *will*, 578 f.
- Short story, Chap. XIV
- Short, wiry sentence, 144 f.
- Should*, *would*, 579 f.
- Siamese Twins, 99
- Simile, 433 ff.
- Slang, 51 ff.
- Spelling, 58 f.
- Statistical fallacies, 330 f.
- Style, 141, 245, 427 ff.; *see* Concrete, Sentences, Pretentious, Clarity, Coherence, Emphasis

Symmetrical sentence, 145 ff.
Synonyms, 62

Tense, sequence, 120, 577; future, 578; in subjunctive, 581

Than, case after, 573; after *different*, 622

Unity, in sentences, 95, 99; in paragraphs, 154 ff.; controlling purpose, 202 ff.; in description, 415 ff.; in character sketch, 454 ff.

Variety, in sentences, 136 ff.

Verb, 574 ff.; agreement in number, 574 f.; in person, 576; tenses, 577; mode, 581

Verbal noun, *see* Gerund

Verbosity, 122 f.

Vocabulary, acquiring a, 54 ff.; 428 ff.

Words, Chap. III, *see* Abstract, Ambiguous, Choice, Concrete, Connotation, Definitions, Dictionaries, Etymology, Force, Placing, Pretentious, Synonyms

